









HISTORY OF
THE ORIGIN OF
THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT
IN AMERICA
AND OF THE ESTABLISHMENT THEREIN OF
METHODISM

✓ BY
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PREFACE

THE story related in this volume has never before been told. The period commencing with the origin of the Wesleyan Movement here, and closing with the Conference held in Philadelphia in the midsummer of 1773, was a momentous one. The events of that time were pregnant with destiny. The struggles and victories of the Wesleyan heroes and heroines of those seven years made possible all the achievements and triumphs of Methodism on this continent that have followed. The labors and successes achieved in those years had their culmination in a General Conference in 1773, which welded the scattered societies together into one system and established rules for their government. It exercised the functions of the Annual Conference also by receiving returns from the various parts of the field and admitting and appointing preachers. The *founding*, the establishing of the American Methodist Connection was accomplished not by the Christmas Conference of 1784, but by the Philadelphia Conference of 1773. The Christmas Conference only marked a further stage in the development of a connection which owed its existence to the First Conference. The Conference of 1784 was convened for the purpose of providing for the ordination of the preachers and for the administration of the holy sacraments in a connection which had been governed for eleven years by the Annual Conference, which was then and for years subsequent to the Christmas Conference a legislative body. The superintendency of

the Rev. John Wesley was formally accepted by the First Conference, and it was as formally continued and proclaimed by the Christmas Conference.

This volume, therefore, is a history of the origin and progress of the Wesleyan Movement in America down to the formal founding of the Methodist connection therein. It is a history of the building of the foundations upon which Methodism so firmly stands, and probably will continue to stand in America until the earth and the heavens pass away.

The material of my narrative was derived chiefly from original sources. I am under great obligation to several persons for kind assistance and words of encouragement. To Miss Katherine Crooks, daughter of the Rev. Dr. George R. Crooks, and granddaughter to Bishop Emory, I am deeply indebted for her very competent assistance in examining a mass of important manuscript documents. I am also under much obligation to Professor Lincoln R. Gibbs, of Boston University, for valuable suggestions, and for kind offices I owe many thanks to the Rev. Mr. Wiggins and Mr. McCullough, of Philadelphia. The Rev. Dr. H. A. Buttz, president of Drew Theological Seminary; the Rev. Dr. and Professor S. F. Upham, of the same seminary; Bishop John F. Hurst, of Washington, D. C.; the Rev. Dr. D. S. Stephens, editor of the *Methodist Recorder*; the Rev. Dr. A. H. Tuttle, of Newark, N. J.; the Rev. S. E. Ayars, librarian of Drew Seminary, and the Rev. Dr. Abel Stevens, the justly renowned historian of Methodism, have all cheered me in my labors by encouraging words, for which I am profoundly thankful.

I also find a special pleasure in acknowledging my particular obligations to Mrs. Lydia A. Clark, of Jersey City, an elect lady, who, by her beautiful character and saintly life, has for nearly threescore years been an ornament to

Methodism. For these many years Mrs. Clark has been to me and mine a most kind and generous friend, and for the encouragement and support she has given me in my work I shall never cease to feel deeply grateful.

Two facts constrained me to publish what I have herein written: First—An evangelical body which has attained to such vast magnitude already as has the Methodist, with promise of a still greater development, ought to be in possession of all the important facts relating to its origin and establishment in this land. Second—I believed that in all probability no person would ever attempt the difficult labor of research which I had performed, without which the work could not be written. Most of the facts in this volume the public does not now possess, as will clearly appear from the following assertions: (1) “The History of American Methodism,” by the Rev. Jesse Lee, which is very valuable, covers the above-mentioned period in barely twenty-six pages. (2) “The History of the Methodist Episcopal Church,” by the Rev. Nathan Bangs, D.D., also a valuable work, devotes to the same period almost thirty-nine pages. (3) In the eloquent and important “History of the Methodist Episcopal Church,” by the Rev. Abel Stevens, LL.D., one hundred and twenty-eight pages are allotted to this period. It is needless to say that in the number of duodecimo pages devoted to this great period of origin, growth, and establishment by any or by all of these historians, it would be in vain to look for a relation in even the baldest and most condensed manner of the events which are essential to an adequate comprehension of the period in question.

The long labor involved in the production of this volume perhaps had better not be mentioned. It, however, is proper to say that the work has not been hurriedly composed, but sufficient time has been given to it to justify the hope that it

will be found to be accurate as to its facts and assertions. The labor of research and collation has been prosecuted with such thoroughness and care as to warrant the hope that the narrative will be found to be adequate as to its matter. The writing, rewriting, revising, and carrying through the press the work I now venture to send forth have occupied more than half a decade in connection with my pastoral labors. But for the fact that I enjoyed a delightful pastorate of five years in West Side Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Jersey City, N. J., with a very kind, affectionate, and indulgent people, where the exactions of ministerial labor were not severe, it may be doubted whether my task would have been accomplished. Amid the heats of summer and the frosts of winter; in the bright spring-time and in sombre autumn, my toil upon these pages has gone on, sometimes for a few minutes or hours at a time, sometimes for days and even weeks, almost consecutively, inspired by the hope that I might accomplish for the Church and the country that which I knew to be a very important task and one which I believed would probably not be done by another pen. However imperfectly my work has been done, the profound significance and often thrilling interest of the facts herein set forth, cannot, I am sure, fail to engage the attention of those who read with a desire to ascertain how was planted and rooted in this great continent that now vast, majestic, and glorious tree whose leaves of healing are fluttering in the breezes of every sky and falling upon all the nations.

JOHN ATKINSON.

HAVERSTRAW-ON-THE-HUDSON, NEW YORK,

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FIRST PERIOD.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT
IN AMERICA TO THE APPOINTMENT OF MR. WES-
LEY'S FIRST MISSIONARIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE ORIGIN OF THE WESLEYAN MOVE-
MENT IN AMERICA.

THE first problem which the historian of the Wesleyan Movement in America encounters is of a threefold nature, namely, When, Where, and How did it begin?

For three-quarters of a century there was no debate about the place of its origin. All the Methodist historical writers of that period, with possibly one exception, concur in ascribing the beginning of the movement to Philip Embury in the city of New York.

The exception, if it be an exception, to the unanimity of the primitive authorities, consists of two words found in Bishop Asbury's Journal, which are, "*and America.*" That is to say, the bishop was at Pipe Creek, holding a conference in May, 1801, at which time he wrote the following sentence: "Here Mr. Strawbridge formed the first society in Maryland—*and America.*" Whether he designed positively to assert that the first Methodist society in this country was founded by Mr. Strawbridge, or whether he merely meant to suggest that his society was possibly the first, is a question to which I shall recur a little later in this narrative.

The latest general history of Methodism in America is that by Bishop McTyeire. It contains this assertion: "The

people who were destined so largely to cultivate the Western Continent began their 'clearing' in 1764 in the woods of Frederick (now Carroll) County, Maryland." McTyeire also states that "Robert Strawbridge, in order of time, talent, and service stands at the head of the noble 'irregulars' who founded Arminian Methodism in America." These statements respecting Strawbridge's alleged priority are positive and unqualified, yet I do not find that Bishop McTyeire offers any adequate proof of their accuracy.

We thus see that the question when and where the Wesleyan movement began in this land is in debate. The author of the first elaborate history of American Methodism, namely, the Rev. Jesse Lee, and all the chief authorities except Lednum in 1859 and McTyeire in 1884, date its origin at the year 1766. As the earlier writers on this question are controverted by later historians, I find it necessary in beginning my narrative to set forth the facts thereto relating as clearly and accurately as I can, in order to show, if possible, *when* and *where* Methodism originated in this country.

The first question, then, that claims inquiry is WHEN did Methodism first appear in America? Bishop McTyeire says that it was in 1764. An earlier historian, namely, the Rev. John Lednum, in his "History of the Rise of Methodism in America," cites passages from Dr. Roberts and Dr. Hamilton, both of Maryland, in support of a still earlier date, and on the authority of Dr. Roberts, he says: "We are assured that as soon as Mr. Strawbridge had arranged his house, he began to preach in it as early as 1760." If either statement is correct, then the primitive traditions and authorities erroneously attributed the origin of the movement to Philip Embury. It is therefore fair to ask whether the statement of Lednum or that by McTyeire is supported by adequate proof.

An article on "Early Methodism in Maryland, and especially in Baltimore," by the late Rev. William Hamilton, was published in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, in July, 1856. Of Mr. Strawbridge, Dr. Hamilton in that article says: "He preached the first sermon, formed the first society, and built

the first preaching-house for the Methodists in Maryland, and in America, being three years, perhaps, earlier than Wesley Chapel, John Street, New York." It is further stated, in the same article, that "a society consisting of twelve or fifteen persons was formed as early as 1763 or 1764, and soon after a place of worship was erected about a mile from the residence of Mr. Strawbridge." Now, did Dr. Hamilton know by indisputable evidence what he thus affirmed?

The only proof which he adduces in support of the above assertions consists of the two noted words in Asbury's Journal, and an unsigned document whose history is obscure, but which, says Hamilton, "has the stamp of age and also the appearance of being torn from the fly-sheet of a Bible or from some old record book." This fugitive fragment bears the assertion that John Evans, "about the year 1764, embraced the Methodist religion under Mr. Strawbridge." This statement, however, was not written by John Evans himself, but it is asserted that David Evans wrote it, though the writing is without his signature. Samuel Evans affixed to it the following note, which he signed, namely, "The above was written by my father, David Evans."

Dr. Hamilton says that John Evans was one of Strawbridge's first converts, albeit William Fort asserts that a conversation John Evans had "with Mrs. Strawbridge resulted in his conversion to God."* If his son David wrote the above statement upon a fly-leaf concerning his conversion, why did not David attest it by his signature? It is not known how long a time elapsed after the writing before Samuel Evans placed his voucher to its authorship upon the document. Neither does David Evans nor Dr. Hamilton indicate the nature or authenticity of the data upon the authority of which the statement was recorded. We cannot now know whether David Evans, in thus declaring that John Evans was converted "about the year 1764," acted under a passing impulse without appropriate deliberation, and wrote entirely from memory, or whether he carefully consulted some record or tradition of questionable or unquestionable authority.

* Fort's article in New York Christian Advocate, July 10, 1844.

Moreover, no word is said respecting the character and habits of David Evans whereby an opinion can be formed concerning his habitual care or carelessness in recording facts, or of his trustworthiness as a witness.

Furthermore, David Evans, if he indited the passage in question, shows therein that his knowledge of the time of John Evans's conversion was not exact. Had it been definite he would scarcely have said that his father became a Methodist "*about* the year 1764." That qualifying word "*about*" means uncertainty here, and indicates that whatever may have been the character of David Evans for understanding, memory, and veracity, he did not know the year in which his father embraced Methodism. Not knowing when that event transpired, he of course could not record the date thereof, and therefore he left it undetermined.

The article in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, in which Dr. Hamilton cites the Evans document, demonstrates the necessity of caution in accepting historical statements upon the mere assertion of any man. In that article Hamilton affirms that John King preached in Baltimore "in the winter or spring of 1770."

Now it is certain that this date is incorrect. John King was born and educated in England, and he did not come to America until after both the winter and the spring of 1770 had passed. Joseph Pilmoor, one of the first two missionaries that Mr. Wesley sent to this country, says, in his Journal, that on August 18, 1770, John King called upon him in Philadelphia, and "said he was just arrived from Europe." Thirteen days afterward King preached a trial sermon before the leaders in Philadelphia, and Pilmoor licensed him to preach. He then sent King into Delaware, where he labored successfully in the gospel, and in April, 1771, Pilmoor found him still there. The inference is inevitable that King did not go to Maryland until after the close of the year 1770, and it is *certain* that he was not in Baltimore in the winter or spring of that year.

In the same article in the *Review* in which Dr. Hamilton asserts that the first Methodist society in America was formed

by Robert Strawbridge, he likewise declares that "early in the summer of 1770 Mr. Pilmoor arrived in Maryland, came to Baltimore, and addressed the people once or twice, standing on the sidewalk as they came out of St. Paul's Church after morning service."

We are now able to correct the erroneous date in this passage. Relying confidently upon such information as he had obtained, Dr. Hamilton declared unqualifiedly that Pilmoor was in Maryland and also in Baltimore early in the summer of 1770; whereas the whole of that summer was spent by Pilmoor, as his Journal attests, in the cities of New York and Philadelphia, save as he made brief preaching visits to rural places contiguous thereto. Nor was he in Baltimore at any time in 1770. It was not until early in the summer (June 4) of 1772 that he looked upon Maryland for the first time. All this will more fully appear in the further development of our narrative. Hamilton, then, was in error respecting both King and Pilmoor, as to the time of their appearance in Baltimore, and in the case of Pilmoor's visit to Maryland and Baltimore he fell two years short of accuracy.

Other errors are apparent in these Maryland traditions. In the Rev. William Fort's article on the "First Log Meeting-House," in the *New York Christian Advocate* of July 10, 1844, the assertion that "Methodism was operating in Maryland several years before Embury crossed the Atlantic," is clearly false. In a petition for a grant of land, addressed by Philip Embury and twenty-four other gentlemen to the Hon. Robert Monckton, Governor of the Province of New York, and dated February 1, 1763, it is declared that about two and a half years prior to that date the petitioners arrived in New York. This establishes the fact that Embury reached the American shore about August, 1760. According to Mr. Fort's unqualified assertion, however, Methodism was planted in Maryland several years before that time. Another bald error in Mr. Fort's article is his statement that Strawbridge came not from Ireland, but that he "was from Yorkshire in England." It is as certain that Strawbridge emigrated from

Ireland to America as it is that he settled and preached in Maryland.

Thus we see how seriously the traditions concerning Strawbridge and events in the primitive Methodist history of Maryland are blemished by errors. The Evans document, on which Hamilton fully relies as a sure authority, does not pretend to be exact. Fort, on the contrary, is positive in his statements respecting Strawbridge, and yet they are totally and transparently erroneous. Now, if he so missed the truth in his attempt to illuminate a somewhat obscure history, and if Dr. Hamilton failed so signally in accuracy in the statements he made so dogmatically concerning the time that King and Pilmoor first preached in Baltimore, may not David Evans have erred also in saying that his father's conversion occurred "about 1764?" Is it possible in reason to accept such a document, undated and unsigned by the writer, and upon it ground the conclusion that Strawbridge's work preceded Embury's by the space of two years?

In the settlement of the question of *when* the Wesleyan movement began in America everything depends upon the *precision* and *certainty* of dates. The subject is chronological; and neither logic nor rhetoric can illumine it except so far as they may dissipate obscurities, expose errors, and bring into view the truth concerning the dates. At the best, the alleged date of the conversion of John Evans is based upon a tradition which at some unknown time was recorded upon a fugitive fly-leaf by some one whom Samuel Evans asserts was *his* father, namely, David Evans. Yet this undated, unsigned, indefinite fragment is so esteemed by Dr. Hamilton that he declares that it "settles, we think, the true origin of Methodism in America." Mr. Crook in fairness says: "It is more than probable that this 1764 was 1767 or 1768, as the phrase 'about the year 1764' may include a period of three or four years."* As a guide in the determination of the time of the beginning of the ministerial work of Strawbridge in Maryland, I regard the Evans document as with-

* Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism, by the Rev. William Crook, p. 158.

out value. At the best it fails to give an exact date, and there is nothing to show that the time of John Evans's conversion, which it suggests was "*about 1764*," was not the mere guess of the writer.

The next piece of evidence which Dr. Hamilton cited in support of the alleged Maryland origin of American Methodism consists of two words in italics in Bishop Asbury's Journal, namely—"and *America*." In an earlier edition of the Journal both words were italicized, whereas in the current edition only the word "*America*" is in italics.

The history of that couplet of words seems to have been this—that in the month of May, 1801, the bishop was at Pipe Creek holding a Conference. He was upon the ground where the local preacher from Ireland achieved his fame as the first Methodist evangelist in Maryland. There it is likely Asbury heard statements concerning the work of Strawbridge. Then he wrote these words, to wit: "Here Mr. Strawbridge formed the first society in Maryland—*and America*."

In determining the degree of importance that should be attached to this record of Asbury in five syllables, it is necessary to bring into view a few facts respecting his want of accuracy as a historian.

The Minutes of the American Methodist Conferences were published in a volume in 1794. The preface thereto is unsigned, but is dated "Botetourt, May 24, 1794." Asbury, being then in Botetourt County, Va., says in his Journal that on the day prior to that date he was "preparing the Minutes." Obviously, then, he edited the volume. In it he gave *June*, 1773, as the time of the first Conference, whereas it sat *July* 14–16, 1773. He was in that historic body and recorded its date correctly in his Journal, which was published before the volume in question. Therefore, he could readily have found the real date. The incorrect date of the first Conference which he sent forth yet stands upon all the published Minutes thereof.

An example of Bishop Asbury's vagueness as a narrator of Methodist history appears in a letter which he wrote to the Rev. Stith Mead, of Virginia, July 30, 1807, in which he says: "Methodism began in America 1769 or 1770 but chiefly ;

as very little was done till the latter end of the year 1771 except a small beginning in New York and Philadelphia." I have given not only the exact words but the punctuation also of this passage from the original autograph manuscript. The passage is at least singular and it scarcely fulfils the requirements of exact and veracious history.

In this communication the bishop is as silent respecting Maryland as if there had been no Methodism within its borders in "the latter end of 1771;" whereas the movement was then making important progress there, and less than two years later the membership of that province was reported by the first American Conference to be five hundred, which was nearly equal to that of New York and Philadelphia combined. He also seems to say here that Methodism did not begin in America until 1769 or later.

There is an important omission by Asbury in his Journal in 1803, where he essayed to record the number of Methodists that were in the country in the year of his arrival. "In 1771," he writes, "there were about three hundred Methodists in New York, two hundred and fifty in Philadelphia, and a few in Jersey." There is no intimation here of the existence of any Methodists in Maryland, though there were in that province at that time a fair proportion of the total number in the country. By this omission Asbury conveyed the idea that there were no Methodists south of New Jersey in 1771 almost as clearly as though he had stated it verbally. In the field Bishop Asbury was a hero and a giant. He knew men and could lead them. His hand could grasp and shape the developing Methodism of a continent; but in writing details of history he was not masterful. Nicholas Snethen, once his travelling companion, in a funeral discourse on Asbury says, "his talent was almost wholly executive. In a judicial or legislative capacity he seemed not to excel." Neither did he excel as a writer of historic facts.

A brief history of Methodism in the United States appeared in the "Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church," in the year 1787.

The Rev. Jesse Lee says that Asbury issued that particu-

lar edition of the Discipline,* and therefore we are warranted in believing that he wrote or at least sanctioned the historical sketch which was inserted therein. That sketch is in the following words, to wit:

“*Question 2.* What was the rise of Methodism, so called, in America?

“*Answer.* During the space of thirty years past certain persons, members of the society, emigrated from England and Ireland and settled in various parts of this country. About twenty years ago Philip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, began to preach in the city of New York, and formed a society of his own countrymen and the citizens. About the same time Robert Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederick County, in the State of Maryland, and preaching there formed some societies. In 1769, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor came to New York, who were the first regular Methodist preachers on the Continent. In the latter end of the year 1771 Francis Asbury and Richard Wright of the same order came over.”

This short narrative was designed to instruct the American Methodists concerning the origin of their church. It was printed, with Bishop Asbury's authority, in their “Book of Discipline.” It was written, too, at an early day, “*about twenty years,*” after the beginning of Methodism in the country.

At that time it was easy to acquire a knowledge of the precise year of its origin, for witnesses thereof were living with fresh and vivid memories of the time, the scenes, and the agencies therein concerned. Asbury himself had been personally familiar with some of those witnesses, and with the localities to which he refers, for about sixteen years. He knew Robert Strawbridge, and associated with

* Lee, in his History of the Methodists (p. 127) says: “In the course of this year [1787] Mr. Asbury reprinted the General Minutes, but in a different form from what they were before. The title of this pamphlet was, A Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America,” etc.

him for about a decade in labor. Had he been concerned about the accuracy of the historic *résumé* which he gave to his church in official form in 1787, he surely might have ascertained and recorded not only the precise year in which Embury began to preach in New York, but also the year of the commencement of the evangelical labors of Strawbridge in Maryland. It seems, however, that he did not appreciate the high importance of definite dates in a narrative of historical events of such signal interest and moment. So without taking the trouble to give to his people precise information of the *time* of the origin of their cause, he merely said: "About twenty years ago, Philip Embury began to preach in the city of New York and formed a society. About the same time Robert Strawbridge settled in Frederick County," etc. From such indefinite statements no student of Methodism could determine the year of its beginning in America.

Furthermore, this sketch in the Discipline of 1787 is not only wanting in exactness with respect to dates, but it is also, in at least one particular, distinctly inaccurate. That inaccuracy I will now point out.

Boardman and Pilmoor came to America in 1769, but they did not both reach New York in that year. They disembarked at Gloucester Point, New Jersey, October 21, 1769,* and after they had "rested a little while at a public-house" they walked to Philadelphia. In that city Boardman opened their mission by a sermon on the Call of Abraham, and soon departed for New York. Pilmoor remained the rest of the autumn and all of the ensuing winter in Philadelphia, and did not go to New York at all in 1769. Yet in the official historical sketch in the Discipline, for which Bishop Asbury was responsible and which he probably wrote, it is said that they "*came to New York*" in 1769. There is not an intimation in that sketch that they came directly from London to Philadelphia, which was the fact; nor that upon their arrival either of them did any service in the latter city, whereas Pilmoor remained and spent five months of successful labor

* Not on October 24th of that year, as Lee and later Methodist historians uniformly assert.

there. Philadelphia was a no less important arena of the growing Wesleyan cause than New York, and it was at that time the more populous town. Boardman, as we have just seen, *began* his American labors in Philadelphia, yet the history of Methodism printed in the Discipline in 1787 does not even mention that city in connection with his arrival or his work, but says, "*In 1769 Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor came to New York.*" If existing records, including Joseph Pilmoor's manuscripts, did not show the inaccuracy of that statement, the historical student would be compelled to believe that both Boardman and Pilmoor came from England direct to New York in 1769, and that both began their mission in that city at once ; whereas they both preached in Philadelphia before proceeding to New York.

Now Francis Asbury came to America two years after Boardman and Pilmoor. With them he was associated in ministerial labor. When this erroneous statement was published by him there were Methodists in Philadelphia who remembered the arrival of the missionaries there, and Pilmoor himself was then residing in or near that city. Indeed, in the funeral discourse preached by Ezekiel Cooper on Bishop Asbury, after his death in 1816, there is an allusion to the fact that Mr. Pilmoor was at that time residing in Philadelphia. The sources of accurate information concerning the arrival of these first two Wesleyan missionaries were accessible to Asbury. Yet the first piece of Methodist history which emanated from his pen is marred not only by inexactness, but also by error respecting them. This seems to have been attributable to his indifference to, or want of appreciation of, the importance of precision and accuracy in historical statements. Apparently he was wanting in what has been called the "historic sense."

The short history of the origin of the Wesleyan cause in this country, which was first published in the "Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church" in the year 1787, continued to appear in the subsequent annual editions of that official publication until 1791. A history of the denomination was prefixed to the edition of the Discipline of the latter year,

which was somewhat more full and definite than that which was published in the four preceding editions. The statements in the historical sketch of 1787 are retained in that of 1791, including the inaccuracy respecting Boardman and Pilmoor, with the addition of a date of the beginning of Embury's work. Other matters also are inserted. This document again appeared unchanged in the Discipline of 1792, where it is embodied in the prefatory address of Bishops Coke and Asbury, to which their names are affixed. Thus they both gave to it their personal and official sanction and became avowedly responsible for the statements it contains. It did not appear in the Discipline entire after 1792. Dr. Stevens erroneously says that it appeared in the Discipline of 1790.* I shall here reproduce it *verbatim*, as it appeared in the "Methodist Episcopal Discipline" in 1791, and again, without change, in 1792.

"During the space of thirty years past certain persons, members of the society, emigrated from England and Ireland and settled in various parts of this country. In the latter end of the year 1766 Phillip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, began to preach in the city of New York and formed a society of his own countrymen and the citizens. In the same year Thomas Webb preached in a hired room near the barracks, and in the year 1767 the rigging-house was occupied. About the same time Robert Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederick County, Maryland, and preaching there formed some societies. The first Methodist church in New York was built in 1768 or 1769, and in 1769 Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor came to New York. In the latter end of the year 1771 Francis Asbury and Richard Wright, of the same order, came over.

"And we humbly believe that God's design in raising up preachers called Methodists in America was to reform the continent, and spread scriptural holiness over these lands. As a proof hereof we have seen in the space of twenty-two years a great and glorious work of God from New York,

* Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, vol. i., p. 71.

through the Jersies, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, and also the extremities of the western settlements."

A degree of indefiniteness and of inaccuracy also appears in this revised and expanded narrative. A notable example of inexactness is the time to which it assigns the erection of the first Methodist church in New York. It is inconceivable that it was not easily possible for Francis Asbury to ascertain in 1791 the year in which that edifice arose. He had preached in it in the latter part of 1771. During the twenty years following he was much in New York ; yet at the end of that period he was uncertain whether the John Street Church was built in 1768 or in 1769. He was giving to the members and preachers of the church of which he was superintendent a narration of the most prominent events in its history ; yet he failed to ascertain for them the year in which the first public edifice of the denomination was built. Nor does it appear that when a year had passed after the publication of this official history of Methodism that Bishop Asbury had reached any more definite knowledge, for the same inexactness respecting the time of the church's erection is found in the same document in the Discipline of 1792.

Now this historic sketch must have been drawn up within twenty-three years after the church in New York was built, when the memory of its construction was yet vivid in many minds. Numbers of people were then living in the city who saw its walls arise. Its erection was noted by both its friends and its foes. A goodly number of the citizens of New York, irrespective of denominational affiliation, contributed to the funds for the building ; and many of these must have been in active life when the Discipline of 1791 was issued. Had he appreciated in a sufficient degree the importance of exact and accurate historical writing, Asbury would surely have informed both himself and the readers of the Discipline concerning the year in which the potential event of the erection of the first Methodist preaching-house in New York occurred.

Thus much have we ascertained respecting Asbury's lack of precision and accuracy in his historical writings. In this critical examination of important documents I have nothing to do with individuals as such, nor with the reverence which is worthily bestowed upon venerable and renowned names. It is my office as a historian to deal justly and impartially with facts as I find them. Only the judicial temper befits a writer of history, whose first and highest duty it is, at whatever cost of time or pains or personal prepossessions, to ascertain the truth and accurately state it. The fact that Asbury was always so busy in the field where he was making history, explains in some degree his want of correctness as a historical writer. It may be said that such faults as I have pointed out in these primitive and official documents are trivial. I must insist that this is not so, because where error and truth are intermingled in any historical work it cannot be accepted as reliable. Absolute trustworthiness is demanded in historic narrative; but this cannot be secured except by the most vigilant and rigid endeavor to exclude all inaccuracies respecting dates, places, persons, and events. History, if written without due regard to truth, degenerates into romance.

With respect to the first two preachers sent by the founder of Methodism to this country, both of whom gave more than four years of devoted service here, it is surely of some importance that any official account of their coming and of their entrance upon their mission should be accurate. The humble movement which has attained to proportions so vast, and which they did so much to develop, requires no less than this. If told at all the story of their coming and of the commencement of their work should be told correctly. Neither is it a matter of indifference that in such a narrative the precise time when the first Wesleyan chapel was built in the American metropolis and continent should be given, yet had we now to rely exclusively for our knowledge thereof upon the history that was put into the Methodist Episcopal Discipline by Bishop Asbury in 1791 and 1792, we should not know whether that achievement was accomplished in 1768 or in 1769. Moreover, had Asbury included in that history the

particulars and the date of Strawbridge's first labors in Maryland, the data for which were accessible through Mrs. Strawbridge, who was alive in all those years from 1787 to 1792, he would have determined whether the Maryland or the New York society was formed first beyond all disputation. He did not choose to do this. Therefore the year in which Strawbridge first preached in the land of the Chesapeake is and must always be unknown.

The significant fact intended to be shown by this review of some historical writings of Bishop Asbury has now been established, namely, that he did not always attain to precision and accuracy in relating historic events. Therefore his brief and uncircumstantial journalistic statement, if statement it be, that Strawbridge formed the first society of Methodists in America at Pipe Creek, cannot be accepted as the conclusion of a thoroughly painstaking and uniformly correct historical authority. We have seen that in his narration of significant events in American Methodist history Asbury faltered in a noticeable degree both as to exactness and correctness. May he not then, from lack of sufficient investigation, have been wanting in clear and exact knowledge of the facts in the case when he struck from his pen the two words in his Journal which Dr. William Hamilton and others have understood as affirming the antecedence of the Maryland Methodist society? If the bishop meant so to affirm, it is remarkable that in doing it he should have employed only ten letters of the alphabet. The use of a few more words might have dispersed the ambiguity of the passage. I, at least, cannot be sure whether Asbury meant by these two words to declare or to interrogate—whether he designed to say that he was certain, or that he was in doubt about the priority of the society of Strawbridge. This, too, is about the way an authority, Mr. Seaman, views the matter, as is shown in his “Annals of Methodism in New York City.”

But granting that Bishop Asbury intended in the two words which we are now considering to declare the priority of the Maryland society, he fails to indicate any proof of the correctness of his declaration. We surely then are entitled

to oppose to the unproven assertion of one early and eminent Methodist historical writer the assertion of another early, and as a Methodist historian an even more eminent, writer. Therefore I shall set against the Journal of Francis Asbury, in 1801, the Journal of Jesse Lee of that very year.

Jesse Lee was the first writer who gave to the people an elaborate history of American Methodism. He was one of the chief preachers of the denomination throughout the period of Asbury's episcopal career. He travelled, as he informs us, "from St. Mary's River in Georgia to Passamaquoddy Bay in Maine." He was the founder of Methodism in New England. He was almost elected a bishop by the General Conference of 1800. His journalistic record of his wide wanderings and fruitful labors was destroyed in the conflagration of the Book Concern in New York in 1836. Before that catastrophe the "Memoirs of Lee," by the Rev. Manton Thrift, came from the press. Numerous passages in Lee's Journal are preserved in that biography. One of those passages is an account of the origin of Methodism in New York, which Lee recorded while he was employed in ministerial service in that city in the early part of 1801. We have already seen what Asbury wrote *at Pipe Creek* in 1801; we shall now bring into view what Lee wrote *in New York* early in the same year. Lee says :

"I will here set down an account of the beginning of Methodism in the city of New York, which was the first society formed in the United States. This society was formed by Philip Embury, from Ireland, in the beginning of the year 1766, when a few of his own countrymen were joined together with him. He then exhorted and prayed with them, and spoke to them about the state of their souls. After a short time some of the inhabitants of New York joined with them. They then hired a sail-loft, in which they met, and Mr. Embury used to preach, exhort, etc. Captain Webb, an officer in the British army, came amongst them, and was much engaged in religion, and preached frequently. After some time they purchased a lot of ground in John Street, on which they

built a church, in the year 1768 ; and on the 30th day of October, in the same year, the church was opened for divine worship; and Mr. Embury preached the dedication sermon. It is now a little upwards of thirty-two years since our society had a house of worship in this place, and they have been increasing and multiplying ever since."

Another fact which should be here noted is that nine years after this account of the origin of Methodism in this country was written by Mr. Lee in New York City, he published his "History of the Methodists." In the early years of the nineteenth century he studied the beginnings and progress of the Wesleyan movement in America with reference to his literary project. For that reason probably he, while a pastor in New York in the early months of 1801, gave his attention to the origin of the cause there. He recorded the results of his investigation in his Journal as above shown. In the nine years following 1801, in which no doubt he was gathering and collating material for the history of Methodism which he published in 1810, he had abundant opportunity to revise the account he wrote in 1801 of the origin of Methodism in New York and the continent, if further researches had proved it to be in any particular incorrect. Yet in his History in 1810 he strictly adhered to what he had written in his Journal in New York City in 1801. He says in his History what he had previously said in his Journal, namely: "In the *beginning* of the year 1766 the first permanent Methodist society was formed in the city of New York;" and he further says: "Not long after the society was formed in New York, Robert Strawbridge, from Ireland, who had settled in Maryland, began to hold meetings in public and joined a society together near Pipe Creek." Thus, as we see, Lee still maintained in his "History of the Methodists" in 1810 what he had affirmed in his Journal in 1801, namely, that Embury originated "the first society formed in the United States." Surely he would not have recorded such a statement in a history for future generations to scan, had not the results of his researches as a historian fully warranted it. He perhaps had opportu-

nity to know what Asbury, in 1801, had said in two words about Strawbridge's priority in America; indeed in the preface to his History Lee says he had consulted "Mr. Francis Asbury's journals, bound and unbound."

It must be noted, too, that Lee was of Southern birth. In the South-land he was educated, converted, and began his illustrious ministry. From his departure from New York, in 1801, to the end of his life, all his time, except about a year, was spent in the Southern country, mostly in Virginia. He was familiar, too, with Maryland. He labored in a circuit contiguous to Baltimore in 1787, and in that city immediately thereafter. He must have heard, then, of the departed Strawbridge, and of his Wesleyan pioneering in that region. Mrs. Strawbridge was then living, and it is reasonable to assume that Lee met her and conversed with her. As a man of shrewd observation, to whom the study of Methodist history was attractive, it is probable that at that time he was alert in gathering, comparing, and attesting facts about his denomination and its heroes, and that he was specially interested in whatever incidents he found that illustrated the origin of Methodism in this land. To such facts he no doubt gave careful attention while he was at or near the locality of Strawbridge's first American labors, and among the people who knew him and cherished his name. Therefore we may believe that Jesse Lee was informed concerning the time when Methodism was planted in Maryland, and that when, in 1801, he wrote that in New York "was the first society formed in the United States," and in 1810, when he reasserted the same thing in his History, he was clearly satisfied that his statement was true.

Lee was a careful and a reliable historian. There seem to be but few, if any, erroneous statements of importance in his History. In the preface to his work, he says: "I have been as careful as possible to state dates and facts such as I think will be for the information of pious people." Not only was he careful about his statements, but he was also diligent and painstaking in gathering the data upon which he based them. In the preface to his History, he says: "I

have read over more than two thousand pages of my Journal and consulted many of the travelling and local preachers in order to ascertain historical facts and useful things which have never yet been published." He says: "I have consulted every author I could find who I thought would afford information on this subject, especially Wesley's 'Journals,' his 'Ecclesiastical History,' and his 'Life,' by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore. Also the 'Methodist Memorial,' by Mr. Atmore, Mr. William Myles's 'Chronological History of,' and Mr. Joseph Benson's 'Apology for the People called Methodists.'" He also consulted "the magazines published by the Methodists, Freeborn Garrettson's 'Travels,' and William Watter's 'Life.'" He was an industrious and competent investigator as well as writer of historical facts. The careful reader who is familiar with the subject cannot fail to be impressed with the remarkable accuracy of his History. This accuracy he sought to secure, for in the preface to his work he affirms: "I have used my utmost endeavors to avoid errors, and to send into the world the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." His book—the product of such patient investigation and rigid care—fairly entitles him to the rank of the most reliable historical authority of American Methodism for the period it embraces.* In the preface thereto he says: "I believe no preacher born in America has had a better opportunity of being thoroughly acquainted with the Methodists than I have." This declaration is vindicated by the accuracy of his History. "His work," says an eminent authority, "is as comprehensive and accurate in its account of Methodism as it is unpretending in its style and veracious in its statements. His industry in collecting facts and his fidelity in recording them, will entitle him to the respect and gratitude of Methodism to the latest period of its history." †

* In this estimate of Lee's superior reliability as a historical authority I do not include the Rev. Joseph Pilmoor, who left in a journalistic form an authoritative history of Methodism in America, but it is in manuscript, and only detached and small portions of it have up to this time been published. It covers only the period from August, 1769, to January, 1774

† The Rev. Dr. Leroy M. Lee, in *Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee*, p. 465.

Possibly some one may say that in according the priority to Embury, Jesse Lee was guided by the short historical narrative which was published in the Methodist Episcopal Discipline, in the latter part of the eighteenth century. While it is said in that narrative that Strawbridge "settled in Maryland" "*about* the same time" that Embury was fixing the foundations of the cause in New York, yet it conveys the impression of Embury's priority. Therefore it may be inferred, I repeat, that Lee was governed by the Disciplinary Sketch in what he wrote of the origin of Methodism in this land.

It is certain, however, that he did not carelessly accept the statements in that official history, for one of the most important therein he has distinctly contradicted; and he has thereby shown that his reliance was not upon what an official historian had written, but upon his own original researches. In the revised and expanded form in which the history of the American Wesleyan cause appeared in the "Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church" in 1791 and 1792, it is said that its origin in New York was in "*the latter end* of the year 1766." This particular date was continued in every successive edition of that Discipline for over a century. Yet Jesse Lee, the accurate and authoritative historian, rejected it in his Journal in 1801, when he asserted therein that the "New York society was formed by Philip Embury *in the beginning of the year* 1766;" and he did the same in his History in 1810, where he reaffirmed that "*in the beginning* of the year 1766, the first permanent Methodist society was formed in the city of New York."

Lee, as a foremost leader of American Methodism, could not have been ignorant of the fact that the Discipline dated its origin in "*the latter end* of the year 1766." That date had stood in that official publication for about a decade, when, in 1801, in the city of New York, Lee wrote in his Journal that "the first society in the United States was formed by Philip Embury *in the beginning* of the year 1766." The same date had been standing in the Discipline for nineteen years, when this careful investigator and painstaking

historian again contradicted it by stating in his "History of the Methodists" that "*in the beginning* of the year 1766 the first permanent Methodist society was formed in the city of New York." The date of the New York origin which Lee opposed to that of Asbury was not hastily promulgated. I repeat that to the date in the Discipline Lee opposed his earlier date in his Journal in 1801, and then again in his History in 1810, when the Disciplinary date, reproduced with each annual reissue of the book, was nearly a score of years old. At that time, with abundant opportunity for reviewing and revising what he had written years before, Lee sent forth the earlier date, with the declaration that he had endeavored to the utmost "to send into the world the truth and nothing but the truth."

Nor can it be believed that Lee was influenced in favor of the priority of Embury by any personal bias toward New York. His nativity, his ties, and his associations would naturally predispose him to accord to Maryland and Strawbridge the honor of the priority if the truth would warrant it. For some time preceding the publication of his History, and, indeed, at the very time that it was passing through the press, he was the chaplain of the National Congress at Washington. As in New York City in 1801 he had good facilities for proving the correctness of the date of Embury's work which he there and then recorded; so in 1810, in the land of the Potomac, he had the opportunity to disprove the alleged antecedence of the New York society, if evidence existed in the region of Strawbridge's labors by which he could do it. The fact that Lee's book was printed in Baltimore during his official residence in Washington also is corroborative of the presumption, which on other grounds is sufficiently warranted, that he was thoroughly satisfied that the statement he made in it of Embury's priority was perfectly accurate. The fact, likewise, that he said in his printed volume what he wrote in his manuscript Journal nine years previously, namely, that Embury began his New York labors in the *beginning* of 1766, notwithstanding Asbury had for nineteen years been declaring in the Discipline that it was *in the latter end* of

that year, warrants the belief that Lee's investigations had brought him to the sure conclusion that the date in the Discipline was not accurate, and that, as a faithful historian, he was compelled to write that the time of the origin of the Methodist Movement in America was *in the beginning* of the year 1766, the Discipline to the contrary notwithstanding.

We now clearly see that the journalistic statement of Asbury and that of Lee thus brought into view, one of which was made in the year 1801 at Pipe Creek, and the other at New York in the same year, are contradictory, allowing that which is not certain, namely, that Asbury did indeed intend to declare rather than to suggest tentatively that Strawbridge's society was first. Bishop Asbury, at Pipe Creek in May, 1801, said: "Here Mr. Strawbridge formed the first society in Maryland—and America." Jesse Lee, a short time previously in the same year in New York said: "In the city of New York was the first society formed in the United States." Asbury, so far as is known, never thereafter made orally or in writing any declaration like that of the two italicized words concerning Pipe Creek. Lee, on the contrary, nine years subsequently, in a "History of the Methodists," formally and with the authoritativeness of a careful historical investigator and writer, reasserted that the society formed by Embury was the first and that its origin dates from the *beginning* of 1766, and not from the latter end of that year.

In view of all the facts and reasons above given, I am compelled to accept Lee as a better historical authority than Asbury, and therefore to receive his statements respecting the time and the place of the origin of the Wesleyan movement in America as veritable history. In saying this I do not impeach the honesty or fairness of Asbury, but must believe that from lack of research or through inadvertence he signally failed at times in historical accuracy. To the two italicized words in Asbury's Journal, written in 1801, is opposed the circumstantial account of the rise of Methodism in New York recorded in that city in 1801 by Jesse Lee in *his* Journal, and nine years afterward repeated in substance by him in his "History of the Methodists." Accepting then

Lee's statement, I am constrained to say that according to the most painstaking and reliable historical authority extant the Wesleyan reformation in the New World *began in the beginning of the year 1766, in New York City*, in connection with the labors of Philip Embury.

This date of Lee, of itself, goes far toward invalidating the two italicized words in Asbury's Journal, namely, "*and America.*" Asbury in the Discipline fixed the time of the origin of Methodism in New York in the *latter end* of 1766, and then he adds that "about the same time" Mr. Strawbridge settled in Frederick County, Maryland. That is to say, according to Asbury, the time of Strawbridge's settlement in Maryland was *about the end of 1766*. I assume, of course, that he reckoned from that period when he wrote the two notable words to which so much importance has been attached by the advocates of Strawbridge's priority. Had he reckoned from the earlier date of Lee, it can scarcely be believed that he would have written the two italicized words in question in his Journal, inasmuch as Lee's date places the origin of Embury's society from eight to eleven months earlier than the date given in the historical sketch in the Discipline of 1791. The case then may be stated thus: If the two Irish lay preachers commenced their work in this country at "about the same time," and that time was by Asbury understood to have been "the latter end of 1766;" and in reality it was not at that time but *in the beginning* of 1766 that Embury began his labors in New York, how could it be affirmed that "Mr. Strawbridge [about the latter end of 1766] formed the *first* society in *America*?"

If, as Asbury states, Strawbridge settled in Maryland about the *latter end* of 1766, and Embury, as Lee states, began his New York ministry in the *beginning* of the same year, and Lee is, as we concede, correct, then Embury's priority is thereby established.

Lee's date of the origin of Methodism in New York, and also his deliberately repeated declaration of the priority of Embury, have the sanction, at least, of Bishop Asbury's silence. He read the "History of the Methodists," and wrote

his approval thereof. In the third volume of his *Journal*, (page 340) Asbury says: "I have seen Jesse Lee's *History* for the first time. It is better than I expected." The bishop dissents from something which Lee therein said of him, but otherwise he makes no criticism of the work. If, in Asbury's view, Lee erred in according priority to the society in New York, and in asserting in opposition to the *Discipline* of 1791, and all the subsequent editions of that publication, that the time of the society's origin was the *beginning* of 1766, the errors were of sufficient import to call for correction, and especially as they contradicted Asbury himself. But the bishop showed no sign of an inclination to challenge any of Lee's dates. As his notice of Lee's *History* was written nine years after he wrote the two notable words in his *Journal* at Pipe Creek, it is a pertinent question if he really meant those words to be a declaration of the priority of Strawbridge, and had found no cause for revising his conclusion, why did he not, while noticing Lee's work in his *Journal*, indicate his belief that the *History of American Methodism*, by Jesse Lee was in that particular at fault? He gives no such indication. Is it not then fair to conclude that here, at least, Asbury, by "silence, gives consent?"

Having thus investigated the evidence presented by Dr. Hamilton to show that the society at Pipe Creek was antecedent to that in New York, I will now proceed to examine what Dr. Roberts says in the same behalf.

The following passage by Dr. Roberts was reproduced in Lednum's "*History of Methodism in America*," from an article in the *New York Christian Advocate* of April 29, 1858. It shows the grounds on which Roberts based his plea for the priority of the Maryland society. He says:

"I have in my possession some letters, written by different individuals at a distance from each other and without any concert upon their part, which disclose some interesting facts. I have space only to notice a few. Mr. Michael Laird, who subsequently settled in Philadelphia, was born April 30, 1771. He obtained his knowledge of these points from his father, who was intimate with Mr. Strawbridge and fully con-

versant with the truth of what is stated in his letter. Mr. Strawbridge came to America in 1760, with his wife and children, and settled in Maryland. Immediately after arranging his dwelling he opened it for divine service, and continued to preach therein regularly. These efforts soon after resulted in the awakening and conversion of several who attended.

“In another communication I ascertain that Henry Maynard was baptized (by Robert Strawbridge) when he was but six or seven years old. At that time Mr. S. was preaching regularly at John Maynard’s, a brother of Henry. Henry accompanied his father to one of these appointments, and Mr. S. baptized him at the spring.

“Henry Maynard died in 1837, aged eighty-one years. This fixes his baptism as early as 1762. John Maynard, at whose house Mr. Strawbridge was then preaching, was himself a Methodist. This renders it positive that Mr. S. had been engaged in preaching regularly prior to 1762, and fully corroborates the statement contained in Mr. Laird’s letter, viz., that he commenced his labors in the ministry immediately after his settlement in Maryland.”

If the letters referred to in these paragraphs contained proof of Strawbridge’s priority, Dr. Roberts might appropriately have produced it in the language of the writers. We have a right to hear the witnesses testify. Would a court admit an advocate’s version of what his witnesses said without hearing them relate it before the jury?

Dr. Roberts says that Mr. Laird “obtained his knowledge of these points from his father ;” and then he abruptly declares that “Mr. Strawbridge came to America in 1760, with his wife and children, and settled in Maryland.” Whether Laird said that in the letter, or whether it is merely an inference drawn by Roberts from something else that he therein said, is not stated.

In the Laird portion of the case, as presented by Dr. Roberts, there are a few things to be noted :

I. The date of Strawbridge’s emigration, namely, 1760, is obviously erroneous. All the known facts in relation to the commencement of the ministry of Robert Strawbridge in

Maryland, are opposed to the hypothesis that it was in the year 1760. There is absolutely no authoritative word in support of a date so remote. Testimony given by Michael Laird himself, which I will now cite, certainly does not prove it. Mr. Laird says: "Mr. Strawbridge emigrated from the neighborhood of Drummernave, a small village about four miles from Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim, Ireland, and settled in Maryland. I was intimately acquainted with this fact since I was a small boy, for I had an uncle who emigrated from Carrick-on-Shannon a few years after and settled also in Maryland. My uncle became a preacher and travelled about six years in the Methodist connection in this country. His name was Michael Laird. Moreover, I was intimately acquainted with Leonard Strawbridge, brother to Robert, for thirty or forty years. He often stopped at my father's house, and also at my house after my father's decease. It was in the year 1758 or 1759 that the Methodist preachers first visited our neighborhood, and I think our family and the Messrs. Strawbridge were of the first members. This was twelve years before I was born." *

I observe that in this passage Mr. Laird does not say anything about *the time* of the emigration of Mr. Strawbridge. The following points in his statement should be specially noted: (1) That the Methodist preachers *first came* into Strawbridge's neighborhood—Drummernave—in 1758 or 1759. The first known record of a Methodist preacher being at Drummernave is in Wesley's "Journal," May 25, 1758. Wesley, who was then there, does not say that a society existed in the place at that time, nor does he even say that he preached there. Laird does not say that a society was formed in 1758 or 1759, but only that the preachers then *first* appeared there.

The next notice that we have of Drummernave is in Wesley's "Journal," June, 1760. Mr. Wesley says that "almost the whole town, Protestants and Papists, were present at the sermon in the evening, and a great part of them in the morn-

* Letter of Michael Laird, dated July 17, 1844, and published in the New York Christian Advocate July 31, 1844. Drummernave is now called Drumsna.

ing, but O, how few of them will bear fruit unto perfection." At this visit to the village he met with atrocious persecution. He does not even yet speak of a society as existing there. It is *not* certain that there was a Methodist society in Drummersnave in the middle of the year 1760, but it *is* certain that one could not have been established there very long before that time. (2) Mr. Laird says: "I *think* our family and the Messrs. Strawbridge were of the first members." So he *thought*, but he does not appear to have *known*. Even if Strawbridge had been the *first* individual that joined the class, of which there is no proof, it would not therefore be certain that the event occurred before 1760, as it is not known that a society was formed at Drummersnave prior to, or even as early as, that year. The dogmatic assertion that "Strawbridge came to America in 1760," which Dr. Roberts made apparently upon the authority of something which Michael Laird wrote, is not sustained by the explicit statements of the same Michael Laird as reproduced above.

(3) The assertion that Strawbridge came to America in 1760 is also in conflict with the conclusions of authoritative Irish students of this question. Dr. Abel Stevens declares that John Shillington is "the best Irish authority in the Methodist history and antiquities of his country." * Now, Mr. Shillington states that Strawbridge's emigration was "not earlier than 1764." Dr. Hamilton, in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* in 1856, said absolutely that Strawbridge came to America in 1759 or 1760, but he was afterward so impressed by Shillington's facts as set forth in a letter then in the hands of Dr. Abel Stevens, that he wrote to the latter acknowledging that "after all Mr. S. [Shillington] may be right." By this admission Hamilton surrendered his claim to an earlier date than 1764.

An Irish authority of high repute, and who probably has ascertained about all that can be known concerning the history of Strawbridge in Ireland, is the Rev. William Crook. In his work entitled "Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism" (page 154), Mr. Crook relates Strawbridge's his-

* Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. I., p. 72.

tory in Ireland as follows: "Shortly after Strawbridge embraced Methodism he encountered violent persecution from his neighbors and immediate friends, so that he was obliged to leave Drumsna [Drummersnave] and take refuge in Sligo, where he joined the society and where he manifested much of that zeal which afterward distinguished him. I suppose him to have found a home in Sligo about the year 1761. The next glimpse we get of him is in the County Cavan, where we hear of his having frequently preached at Kilmore. About the year 1763 or 1764 he removed to Tandragee, where he was employed for some time in erecting some buildings convenient to the town. He made Terryhugan, which Wesley denominates 'the mother church of these parts' his headquarters, and resided in an humble cottage amongst the hearty Wesleyans of this favored locality. From Terryhugan as a centre he itinerated through the neighboring country, where his labors were highly prized, and where his name and memory were cherished by all who knew him. About the year 1764 or 1765 he married one of the worthy, devoted Wesleyans of Terryhugan—a Miss Piper—and shortly after, probably in 1766, with his young wife, bade farewell to Ireland, to find, like Embury and Williams, a grave in the New World."

Mr. Crook does not profess to have secured precise dates of these events. Tradition was his only guide, and he knew its liability to err. "In the case of Strawbridge," he says, "we have little or no reliable dates, and no documents illustrative of his life previous to his emigration. We can only then spell out our way by comparing one date with another, and can only hope to be approximately correct." In assigning the emigration of Strawbridge to about 1766, Mr. Crook says: "I do not give these figures dogmatically, but merely as the nearest approach I can make to the true date. I am aware that many high authorities on the other side of the Atlantic have claimed a much earlier date for Strawbridge and Methodism in Maryland. I have read all the documents by Dr. Roberts, Dr. Hamilton, etc., and have seen no *proof* as yet that Strawbridge left Ireland before 1766." In this Crook has corroboration in George Bourne, of Baltimore, who, as we

shall see, "after the most accurate research," declared his belief that Strawbridge's society in Maryland was younger than Embury's by "nine or twelve months at least." According to this, the society in Maryland was formed, say in 1767. As to Strawbridge's alleged antecedence, Mr. Crook says : "In the case of New York and Embury, we have documentary evidence that the society was formed in 1766. About that there can be no dispute ; while in relation to Maryland and Strawbridge, we have no documents whatever that can be called reliable, and I think it is impossible to prove that Strawbridge left Ireland before 1766." *

(4) While the testimony published by Michael Laird in 1844 affords no proof that Robert Strawbridge was a member of a Methodist society before 1760, the researches of Shillington and Crook have shown that, after his union with the Methodists, he had a period of ministerial activity in Ireland. He became a local preacher, and it is certain that as such he travelled in several localities in his native Erin. While thus preaching, he, like Embury, wrought at the craft of a house-builder. In the course of this period he married. All this, obviously, involved time. He probably did not preach until some time after he joined the Wesleyans. His career as a Methodist preacher in Ireland could not have been achieved in a day. In all this we see the groundlessness of Dr. Roberts's unqualified declaration that "Mr. Strawbridge came to America in 1760, *with his wife and children*." If Roberts erred in this particular, it is reasonable to infer that he possibly deviated from the straight line of accuracy in other statements.

II. In calling Michael Laird as a witness Dr. Roberts failed to indicate that he was an Irishman, but said that he "obtained his knowledge of these points from his father who was intimate with Mr. Strawbridge and fully conversant with the truth of what is stated in his letter." When I read this passage I understood by it that the elder Laird was associated with Strawbridge in Maryland. When subsequently I came to read the letter of Michael Laird of July, 1844, I saw that the elder Laird lived in Ireland and never saw America.

* Ireland and the Centennary of American Methodism.

It is obvious, then, that neither Michael Laird nor his father was with Strawbridge in Maryland. Whatever they may have known about him during his residence in this country must have been obtained otherwise than from personal association with him. Strawbridge emigrated before Michael Laird existed, and whatever Michael's father may have told him about the date of that migration was probably derived from memory, and it is likely that Michael repeated it from memory.

III. Apparently upon Michael Laird's authority Dr. Roberts says that Strawbridge, "immediately after arranging his dwelling opened it for divine service," and that his "efforts soon after resulted in the awakening and conversion of several who attended;" but he does not say that a *society* was formed immediately. A question which is necessarily left undetermined is, How long was the interval between the arrival of Robert Strawbridge and the formation of the first Wesleyan class in Maryland? In that wilderness region, with all his new adjustments to make, his livelihood to procure, and with but few and scattered neighbors, who were ignorant of Methodism, it may be assumed with reason that some time elapsed before the immigrant preacher advanced in his evangelical work to the degree of constituting a Methodist society. As to when that result was achieved by him is a different question from that of when he reached Maryland. Strawbridge might have been there a year or two at least, engaged in securing the location and settlement of his family and providing subsistence for them, forming an acquaintance with the country and its rustic inhabitants, and conversing and preaching as opportunity allowed, before he could gather converts into a society.

The other portion of Dr. Roberts's case is the Maynard tradition, which the Rev. William Fort, of Maryland, published in the *New York Christian Advocate*, July 10, 1844. Mr. Fort says: "As early as 1762 or 1763, Strawbridge was not only preaching but baptizing in Frederick County. He had an appointment regularly at John Maynard's, who was then a Methodist, and at one of these appointments, in 1762

or 1763, he baptized Henry Maynard, who died in 1837." Fort cites no word from any authority in support of these statements. Like Roberts with the Laird tradition, he does not permit his witness to appear and testify.

In approaching the Maynard tradition Dr. Roberts says : " In another communication I ascertain that Henry Maynard was baptized (by Robert Strawbridge) when he was but six or seven years old. Henry Maynard died in 1837, aged eighty-one years. This renders it positive that Mr. Strawbridge had been engaged in preaching regularly prior to 1762."

This last sentence seems to show reckless reckoning. "*This*" does *not* "render it *positive*," upon Dr. Roberts's own showing, "that Mr. Strawbridge had been preaching regularly" in Maryland "prior to 1762." Granting for the moment what Roberts asserts, namely, that "Henry Maynard was baptized when he was but *six* or *seven* years old," and that he "died in 1837, aged eighty-one years," we are brought by correct computation from these data to the year 1763 as authoritatively as to 1762. Yet ignoring this plain fact, Roberts declares that it is hereby made certain that Strawbridge preached in Maryland in 1762. Fort did not calculate so loosely, but said that Strawbridge "in 1762 or 1763 baptized Henry Maynard."

The age of the boy at the time it is claimed that the Irish local preacher baptized him is uncertain. Dr. Roberts does not say that he was then *six* or that he was *seven* years old, but that "he was but *six* or *seven*." That is to say, we do not know, as our narrator obviously did not know, just how old this subject of baptism was, when, "at a spring," he received the sacred rite.

Whence did Dr. Roberts derive these alleged facts? From whom did Mr. Fort receive the story? We do not know. Neither Fort nor Roberts indicates the character of the authority upon which their assertions herein are based. Dr. Roberts merely says : "From *another communication* I ascertain that Henry Maynard was baptized (by Mr. Strawbridge) when he was but *six* or *seven* years old." Who was

the author of that "communication?" Or was it like the Evans document in this case, unsigned? Was the "communication" written at or soon after the time of the baptism, or was it written long after the event, when the writer's memory was dimmed by age? We cannot tell. Was the author of the communication a person of clear intelligence, sound memory, and perfect reliability? We know not. We only know that the writer had not definite knowledge of the boy's age at the time he was baptized, or he would not have said that "he was but six or seven years old."

At what age, in Strawbridge's view, a child ceased to be a proper subject of infant baptism, is uncertain. He did not submit to ecclesiastical authority in administering the sacraments. There is no evidence that he ever received ordination. Therefore he was a law unto himself. If he deemed it right to baptize a child of six or seven years as an infant, he might have believed himself justified in baptizing one as such who had come to the age of ten or more years. In a leading Methodist journal—the *Nashville Christian Advocate* of July 21, 1892—a correspondent inquires, "Should children twelve years old receive infant baptism?" The editor answers: "We doubt whether in any case it should be done." But suppose Strawbridge did not so doubt. The baptism itself proves nothing as to Maynard's age at the time when he received it.

Maynard, though but a boy, may have been a professed believer, and Roberts says nothing to the contrary, nor does Fort. If he was baptized as a believer, he may have been at the time of the event more than six or seven or even twelve years old. We are warranted in stating these questions because we have no knowledge of the character of the "communication" from which the story of Maynard is derived, nor of the trustworthiness of the memory, or of the veracity, of the person who related it.

In all of the contention in behalf of the alleged antecedence of Strawbridge there is a want of the certainty which can be derived only from primitive, authentic, and dated documents. The case rests wholly upon tradition. No doc-

uments dated within three or four decades of the origin of Strawbridge's society have been produced to prove its chronological precedence. The fickleness and treachery of the human memory is proverbial, and renders tradition somewhat unreliable at best, and especially when it is not corroborated by trustworthy records. We are indeed obliged to receive much historical *data* from tradition, because in numerous cases it is our only guide. But when, as in this case, we have dates that are established by authenticated writings on the one hand, and only tradition on the other, we cannot allow tradition, which is but hearsay, to discredit the evidence of primitive, authentic, unimpeached, and incontrovertible records. Tradition, while reliable in its main outlines, is commonly uncertain as to particular facts. This arises from the liability to misapprehension by those who from time to time receive it, and to the changed form which it inevitably assumes in passing from lip to lip through a lengthened period. Imperfection of memory in those who transmit a story orally, through a generation or two, always impairs its integrity. Tradition is sadly prone to mix error and truth so as to confuse, and even partially discredit, the latter. This, as former pages show, is true of the Maryland traditions ; and therefore we may not accept an earlier date of the commencement of Strawbridge's ministry in that province than can be vindicated by authoritative documentary evidence.

CHAPTER II.

TESTIMONIES FROM PRIMITIVE SOURCES CONCERNING THE BEGINNING OF THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT IN AMERICA.

HAVING examined what has been set forth in behalf of an alleged earlier origin of the Wesleyan movement in this country than that which has commonly been received, I shall now proceed to produce evidence to prove the three following propositions: First, that there is sufficient ground for the assumption that neither Robert Strawbridge nor his wife, who came with him to America and who survived him many years—certainly above a decade—ever claimed that his ministry at Pipe Creek began before Embury entered upon his evangelical labors in New York. Second, that one of the earliest ministerial contemporaries of Strawbridge here has shown that the Methodist Society formed in New York in 1766 was antecedent to that in Maryland; and third, that the uniform testimony of the fathers of Methodism in this land is to the chronological precedence of the work of Philip Embury in the city of New York.

The Rev. William Colbert was a native of Maryland, and a leader in the field when Methodism here was young. He was an able, laborious, and successful itinerant, and a contemporary of several of the earliest Methodists of Maryland. He was an early colleague and cherished friend of Henry Boehm, one of the travelling companions of Bishop Asbury and the centenarian of the Methodist Episcopal Church. I well remember in my association with the venerable Boehm with what affectionate interest he would recur to his ministerial intercourse with Colbert. He pronounced him “a sound divine and a great revivalist.” I have carefully examined Colbert’s manuscript diary, and it evinces the intelli-

gence, activity, and force which he displayed in his fine ministerial career.

Now Mr. Colbert personally knew Mrs. Strawbridge. He visited her at least once. It was in 1792. At that time he must have been familiar with the historical sketch of Methodism published in the successive editions of the Discipline of his Church, and also he must have noted that it seems to accord the priority to Embury. Prior to that visit probably he had read in the Disciplinary sketch of 1791 that Embury formed his society in 1766. He was then laboring in Harford Circuit, a field that had been consecrated by the toils and achievements of Robert Strawbridge, and no doubt he held friendly conversations with various persons who knew that evangelist in the early days of his American ministry. A man so mentally bright as Colbert, and so zealous in the Methodist cause, in visiting the widow of the Wesleyan pioneer of Maryland probably would converse with her about her departed companion and his work. Such conversation, one would think, would naturally revert to the question of priority, and especially so if Mrs. Strawbridge had knowledge that to her husband it belonged. If he originated Methodism in America she had good opportunities to know it. Robert Strawbridge knew Robert Williams, the first Wesleyan preacher that came hither after Methodism rose here, and who, in his early American itinerancy alternated between New York and Maryland. In New York Williams was a coadjutor of Embury; in Maryland, of Strawbridge. Captain Webb was Embury's great helper in New York and he also labored in Maryland. Richard Boardman was in New York with Embury, and he was in Maryland as early as 1772.* Joseph Pilmoor was much in New York as one of Wesley's first missionaries, and we know, too, that he and Strawbridge were together in Philadelphia, and that in 1772 he travelled in the latter's field. Thus, in the first years of the American work, there was much intercourse between the Methodists of New York and those of Maryland through the preachers who toiled in both provinces. What

* Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 57.

more natural than that in both fields those preachers should converse about the Wesleyan movement in the land and of the place and time of its origin. Indeed, it is possible that Strawbridge was in New York and in personal intercourse with Embury, as he visited Philadelphia in the beginning of 1770, a fact which hitherto has not received public historical record. If he formed the first society on this continent, he, under these conditions, could scarcely have avoided knowing it, and in that case, others, through him, would have known it, especially Mrs. Strawbridge. Cherishing the memory of her husband, as no doubt she did, would she not have been ready to speak of a fact which, if known, would gild his name with unfading lustre? Would she not have been apt to refer to an event so illustrious in his ministry in her conversations with Methodist preachers, when the work he began had grown into a considerable and an increasing church?

After his visit to Mrs. Strawbridge, Colbert took up his pen and under the date of February 24, 1792, he wrote in his diary these words: "Visited Sister Strawbridge, the widow of one of the first Methodist preachers that appeared in America."

This is all that William Colbert saw fit to record concerning what may be called a historic interview over a hundred years ago. That brief record my eyes have scanned where his long-vanished hand traced it in ink. He wrote, as probably he preached, with pertinence and terseness. He put all he had to say of his visit with Mrs. Strawbridge into a sentence of sixteen significant words which bear strongly upon the question of priority. If she believed that her husband formed the first society in America would not her pastoral visitor, who was then laboring in the field where he toiled, have been likely to hear it from her lips? If Colbert had learned from Strawbridge's contemporaries and spiritual children that he himself knew of his antecendence to Embury, would not Colbert, in his conversation with Mrs. Strawbridge, probably have referred to an event so honorable to the name and so conducive to the fame of her sainted companion? And in that case would not the record

in his diary probably have been something like this : Visited Sister Strawbridge, the widow of the FIRST *Methodist preacher* that appeared in America? Would not Mr. Colbert have felt honored in recording such a fact? Instead of doing this, however, he simply wrote this lucid sentence : “ Visited Sister Strawbridge, the widow of *one of the first* Methodist preachers that appeared in America.” This sentence by Colbert is probably the only word extant which appears to have emanated from the Strawbridge household ; and it does not uphold the claim that Strawbridge’s society was antecedent to Embury’s.

The Rev. George Brown, D.D., was an eminent minister and a presiding elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church and afterward entered the ministry of the Methodist Protestant Church. He joined the itinerancy from Baltimore in 1815, and his first circuit was Anne Arundel, in Western Maryland, and in the region where Strawbridge labored. His grandfather settled at Pipe Creek long before the days of Strawbridge, and there his father lived through the period of Strawbridge’s career in America. Dr. Brown was above nineteen years of age at his father’s death, and therefore had good opportunity to learn from him facts concerning early Methodism at Pipe Creek. On this subject he, in his “ Recollections of Itinerant Life,” says : “ My father, from the days of Robert Strawbridge to the day of his death, had been a consistent member of the Methodist Church. My father and mother belonged to the first class of Methodists ever formed in Maryland. It was organized by Robert Strawbridge.” Brown here only claims that Strawbridge’s society was the first in Maryland. He does not intimate that it was the first in America. His parents were neighbors of Mr. and Mrs. Strawbridge as well as members of the society, and if antecedence to Embury was claimed by them it would seem that the Brown family should have heard of it.

I shall, in the second place, proceed to show that almost the earliest ministerial contemporary of Robert Strawbridge in this country accorded the priority to the movement in New York.

Joseph Pilmoor landed in New Jersey, October 21, 1769, and entered upon the work which Mr. Wesley sent him to do. Within three months thereafter he became acquainted with Robert Strawbridge in Philadelphia, as his Journal attests. Having come so recently to the country to toil in and for the Wesleyan cause Pilmoor, with his intelligence and mental alertness, would, one would suppose, have sought to obtain from Strawbridge information as to how long and to what extent he had labored for the same cause in the Maryland wilderness. Here, too, in the fall of 1769 and later, Pilmoor was in close association with Captain Webb, who also seems to have known Strawbridge at this time, and who was with Embury in New York soon after he formed his society. Mr. Pilmoor, therefore, had opportunity to ascertain what certainly he must have wished to know, namely, whether the Wesleyan movement in this continent began in New York or in Maryland.

I have just said that Captain Webb appears to have known Strawbridge at that early day. The authority for this statement is Mr. Pilmoor, who in his Journal, under the date of November 4, 1769, refers to the captain's arrival in Philadelphia from Wilmington with a report of success "in turning men from darkness unto light." He adds: "The work of God begun by him and Mr. Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, soon spread through the greater part of Baltimore County and several hundreds of people were brought to repentance and turned unto the Lord." It thus appears that within four years after the origin of the movement in New York Pilmoor had knowledge of its existence and progress in Maryland, and also had been in personal intercourse with both Webb and Strawbridge. He must have been strangely indifferent to the history of the cause which had been established so recently in the land, and which he had crossed the ocean to serve, if in his conversations with the founders thereof he failed to become informed concerning the place and time of its origin.

We are warranted, then, in assuming that Pilmoor early learned whether Methodism in this country began in Mary-

land or in New York. On this point he delivers important testimony. This is what in his Journal he says about it :

“ The work of God, which has so wonderfully spread in a few years through most parts of Great Britain and Ireland, lately reached across the Atlantic Ocean. This was brought about by means of several poor people that had been in communion with the Methodists in Europe who went to settle in that country. After some time they were joined by Mr. William Lupton, a gentleman of considerable property in New York, and not long after by Mr. Thomas Webb, who became a preacher among them and helped them much. As they met with great encouragement and found the people of New York very desirous of hearing, they resolved to build a chapel and did all in their power to promote the work.”

Pilmoor here ascribes the origin of the Wesleyan movement on this side of the sea to “several poor people” who came hither to settle. Who were they? The answer is given in an account of themselves which they related to the Honorable Robert Monckton, Governor of New York, in a petition which they addressed to him February 1, 1763, and which is still preserved in the archives of that commonwealth. They said :

“ All your petitioners except William Folk, are natives of the kingdom of Ireland, and all of the established Church of England, and before their departure thence they formed a scheme of settling in this country. Eight of your petitioners being bred to the business of the linen and hempen manufacture in every branch thereof, they proposed to use their best endeavors toward the introduction and promotion of that branch in such place as they should find encouragement to settle in for this purpose. Before their departure from the said kingdom they formed themselves into a company, and about two years and a half ago arrived in this province. Soon after their arrival they made application to the Honorable Cadwallader Colden, Esq., then Commander-in-chief of

this province, with a view of obtaining a tract of land to form a settlement on for the purpose aforesaid, but by reason of their ignorance of the situation of this province and of their not being able to find out where any vacant land lay, your petitioners were at that time disappointed in their expectations of obtaining such grant.

“Your petitioners have ever since used their utmost endeavors to find out a tract of land whereon they could form a settlement; for by their continual residence in this city of New York, where they were obliged to remain in order to support themselves and their families, they were deprived of such a knowledge of the interior parts of this province as would enable them to proceed with certainty toward the obtaining of a grant of lands proper for their settlement. Despairing of coming at the knowledge of such tract they were under the necessity of causing an advertisement to be inserted in one of the public newspapers of this colony, signifying that they wanted such a tract of land for their settlement, in pursuance of which they have since received several proposals to purchase several tracts of land, none of which on the terms proposed to them they could comply with without depriving themselves of a probability of being able to carry on the branch of manufacture as first intended. Upon the encouragement your Excellency was pleased to give to some of your petitioners they have at length found that there is a tract of land fit for their settlement which is vested in the Crown and is situate, lying and being in the County of Albany to the westward of the patent of Queensbury lately granted to Daniel Prindle and others on both sides of a branch of Hudson’s river which runneth northwardly; bounded northerly by vacant lands and lands which are petitioned for, and southerly by Hudson’s river. Said tract of land your petitioners are desirous of obtaining in the quantity of twenty-five thousand acres in order to cultivate and improve the same, and whereon they would engage to form an immediate settlement; which settlement they purpose should be as soon as possible after a grant may be obtained; which settlement they purpose should consist not only of

themselves and their families, but likewise of many other persons—their friends in the said kingdom of Ireland whom they have the greatest reason to think would immediately remove hither provided your petitioners were able to accommodate them with a competent part of the said lands of their settlement. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Excellency will be favorably pleased by his Majesty's letters-patent to grant unto your petitioners respectively, and to their respective heirs and assigns, the quantity of one thousand acres of the tract of land above described under such quit-rent provisos and restrictions as are contained in his Majesty's instructions."

This aged document, which antedates by three years the beginning of Methodism in America, bears the signatures of Philip Embury, John Embury, David Embury, Peter Embury, Paul Heck, Jacob Dulmidge, Sen., Jacob Dulmidge, Jr., Valentine Dettler, William Folk, Edward Carscallen, and fifteen others. "A committee of his Majesty's Council, at Fort George, in the city of New York," on May 12, 1763, recommended to the Governor that a grant of four hundred acres should be made to each of these twenty-five petitioners in case they gave security to the satisfaction of his Excellency that they would settle twenty-five families thereon within three years after the date of the grant. Finding, however, that the lands were not suited to their purpose, some of them petitioned for another grant, which was accorded to them on March 13, 1765, comprising eight thousand acres. The legal record of the conveyance of this land to Philip Embury, Peter Embury, James Wilson, John Wilson, George Wilson, Moses Cowen, and Thomas Porter is dated the 31st of October, 1765.

It is apparent that in this company of Irish emigrants were the "several poor people" who Pilmoor says extended the "work of God" known as Methodism over the sea. They were joined by William Lupton he declares, a man "of considerable property in New York, and not long after by Thomas Webb. They found the people of New York very

desirous of hearing. They resolved to build a chapel and did all in their power to promote the work." Such is Pilmoor's testimony to the priority of New York.

In the third and last place I will show that the earliest documentary and oral testimony of the fathers of Methodism in this country was in favor of the antecedence of the New York society.

We have just seen that Pilmoor, who knew Strawbridge and was closely associated with Captain Webb two years before Asbury came hither; who as pastor had intimate knowledge of the society in New York four years after Embury formed it, and who labored in Strawbridge's field in 1772; Pilmoor, with all these opportunities for getting accurate knowledge, states that Methodism was projected over "the Atlantic Ocean" by means of "several poor people" who planted it in New York.

William Watters was an early Methodist convert in Maryland, entered the itinerancy in 1772, and was familiar with the history of the movement in that province. In his "Autobiography" (p. 109) he says: "Richard Owen was awakened under the preaching of Robert Strawbridge, who with one more, Philip Embury, were the first Methodist preachers in America." If Strawbridge was first in this field Watters should have known it. Had he known it probably he would have mentioned it here.

William Colbert, fresh from an interview with Mrs. Strawbridge, testified to the same purport by writing of her husband in his diary, not as *the* first, but as "*one of* the first Methodist preachers that appeared in America."

Freeborn Garretson first met the Methodist preachers in Maryland when he was seventeen years old, as he informs us in his "Experience and Travels," which was published in 1791, and also in his Semi-Centennial Sermon preached before the New York Conference, May, 1826. Therefore his first contact with them was in 1769, or at the latest 1770, as he became seventeen in August, 1769. Garretson grew to manhood in Baltimore County, entered the ministry in 1776, and his first field of labor was Frederick Circuit,

within which was Pipe Creek. He knew Strawbridge, and was familiar, too, with the first Methodists of Maryland. In his "Semi-Centennial Sermon" Garrettson says that Embury preceded Strawbridge. He refers to the society in New York, which he says was founded in 1766; adverts to the building of the chapel in John Street, and then he declares: "Some time *after this*, Mr. Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, settled at a place called Pipe Creek, in Maryland, where he began to preach, formed a society, and built a log meeting-house."

In the Discipline of his Church in 1787, and later, Bishop Asbury put Embury before Strawbridge, saying that the latter settled in Maryland about the time the former began preaching in New York; and Ezekiel Cooper, in a funeral sermon on Asbury which he preached in Philadelphia in 1816, and also published in a volume, said: "In New York, where the first society was formed by Philip Embury." Cooper was a native of Maryland and was intimately associated with the bishop for thirty years. We have already seen and dwelt at length upon the testimony of Jesse Lee, a contemporary of Cooper, and a chief figure in the Methodist drama here for a third of a century, and who with his pen strongly and repeatedly asserted Embury's precedence. The Rev. Manton Thrift, a preacher of the Virginia Conference, which he joined in 1812, in his "Biography of Lee" (page 11), says that Methodism in America "began in the city of New York."

The Rev. Henry Boehm, who travelled over the country with Bishop Asbury five years and was his chosen executor, a Methodist patriarch from whom I personally heard much about early Methodism, and by whose side I stood as his amanuensis and spokesman for the occasion, on his hundredth birthday, June 8, 1875, in Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Jersey City, before a crowded auditory;—Mr. Boehm bore testimony to the priority of the society formed by Embury in New York. In a letter from his hand, dated November 13, 1857, to the Rev. J. B. Wakeley, and which was printed in "Lost Chapters," he said: "I am now in my eighty-third year. I heard Robert Strawbridge preach at my father's

house in 1779. I entered the travelling connection in 1801, and my first field of labor was in Maryland. I travelled with Bishop Asbury for five years—from 1808 to 1813. During that time I was with Bishop Asbury through Maryland several times, and at Pipe Creek. I also saw the old Log Meeting-House in 1808, which had been converted into a barn. Though travelling through Maryland so frequently, and conversing with the old preachers and the members of the church, I never heard any claim that Methodism in Maryland was earlier than in New York. No one ever hinted it in my presence. It was universally admitted that Methodism in New York had the priority.”

In almost daily association with Bishop Asbury for five years one would think that if he had held the belief of the priority of Strawbridge Mr. Boehm would have heard it.

In accordance with these statements of the venerable Boehm is the testimony of Mr. George Bourne. George Bourne was a proprietor of a newspaper called the *Baltimore Evening Post and Mercantile Daily Advertiser*,* and in 1807 he published a Life of Mr. Wesley. To that work, which comprises an octavo volume, he appended a “Comprehensive History of American Methodism,” which, with the exception of that issued with the Discipline in 1787–1792 inclusive, is the earliest account of the denomination printed in this country of which I have knowledge. It was three years earlier than Lee’s “History of the Methodists,” and, like it, it came forth from Baltimore. The question even then was in some quarters considered whether the society in New York or in Maryland was formed first. Mr. Bourne investigated this question. Sources of information were then accessible that were both primitive and authoritative. John Evans, the alleged time of whose conversion under Strawbridge I have already discussed in these pages, and who undoubtedly was one of the early Methodist converts at Pipe Creek, was then living and could be consulted in person or in writing. Indeed Mr. Evans lived until February 13, 1827, as the inscription on his gravestone attests. Henry Maynard, too, was

* Scharf’s Chronicles of Baltimore, p. 88.

living then. Numerous other witnesses, of both the ministry and laity, who were familiar with the facts relating to the origin of Methodism in Maryland were then here to testify concerning them. Surely that was a very favorable time for securing data by which to determine this question. Mr. Bourne improved his opportunity. The result he gave in 1807 in his "History of American Methodism" as follows: "It has long been a question with the curious who are anxious to know every circumstance connected with the commencement of Methodism in the United States, whether the first society was established in Maryland or New York. After the most accurate research the information I have procured induces me to believe that a Methodist Society was formed at New York at least nine or twelve months previous to the first that was collected by Mr. Strawbridge."* Thus this early historian in Maryland concedes to Embury the priority. Bourne and Jesse Lee herein perfectly agree.

Mrs. Dulmage, the mother of Mrs. Rev. Samuel Coate, died in Canada in the winter of 1809-10. Coate was a pastor in Baltimore from 1802 to 1804. In a letter to the Rev. Joseph Benson, published in the *London Methodist Magazine*, Coate described Mrs. Dulmage's triumphant death, and says: "She was a sister of the first Methodist who ever received meetings into his house in New York (Philip Embury) or in America."

The second John Street Church in New York was dedicated January 4, 1818. Nathan Bangs preached on that occasion. In his sermon was the following utterance: "The first Methodist Society was formed in this city (which indeed was the first in America) in the year 1766." Dr. Bangs has elsewhere told us that when this sermon was preached in John Street, Hannah Dean Hick, who was a member of that society before Boardman and Pilmoor reached these shores, was still there. Other primitive New York Methodists were then there. Asbury, who for four and forty years was so much among his friends in New York, had been in his grave less

* The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., with Memoirs of the Wesley Family, to which are subjoined Dr. Whitehead's Funeral Sermon, and a Comprehensive History of American Methodism. By George Bourne. Baltimore, 1807, p. 322.

than two years. Yet on this great day of dedication, when the occupants of the latter temple were necessarily led to think of the former and humbler temple and its first worshippers, the fact that the society which Embury formed was the first in America appears to have been unclouded by a doubt. If Asbury believed that the Maryland Methodists were antecedent to Embury's society it would seem that he had not published it in New York, as he obviously did not assert it to his travelling companion, the Rev. Henry Boehm. Asbury's close friend, Thomas Morrell, who early labored in both New York and Baltimore, accords to Embury the priority in his Journal.

What was the cause of this early and general agreement of testimony respecting the historical precedence of the society of Embury? It must have been because from the beginning it was well understood that he was in advance of any other person in planting Methodism in America. This having been confessed when the sources of true data were new and easily consulted, the unanimity of the testimony thereto followed inevitably. Strawbridge lived and preached in this country for about fifteen years after the movement began, and his wife long survived him. Then surely there was no need that a mistake should exist among the early American Methodists as to the time and the place of the origin of their cause.

I have thus discussed at length the long-debated question concerning *when* and *where* Methodism first arose in America. It is apparent that there is very little evidence of any kind—it might almost be said none whatever—to support the claim that Strawbridge's society was the first. On the other hand, the proof that New York Methodism was anterior to that at Pipe Creek is clear, direct, cumulative, and convincing. A succession of impartial witnesses of the highest credibility, from the south and from the north, from the time of Strawbridge and Embury to the opening of the second John Street Church, unite in establishing this fact. That the Wesleyan movement in America began in New York seems indisputable in the light of the evidence of tradition and of the earliest authoritative documents.

CHAPTER III.

THE HISTORIC GERMAN-IRISH EMIGRATION.

PHILIP EMBURY and a number of other German-Irishmen of Ballingran looked toward this broad land, in 1760, as an inviting field for a manufacturing industry, which they designed unitedly to establish. We now come to the pregnant event of the sailing of those people from the Irish shore to the Western World.

On a summer day in 1760 a ship lay at a pier in Limerick, about to sail for New York. It contained a company of emigrants, which consisted of Philip Embury and Margaret, his wife,* Paul Heck and his wife Barbara, John Embury, David Embury, Peter Embury, James Wilson, George Wilson, Samuel Wilson, Henry Lower, Philip Cook, Jacob Dulmidge, Sr., Jacob Dulmidge, Jr., Edward Carscallen, Nicholas Shouldes, Peter Shouldes, Julius Shire, Peter Lawrence, Henry Shire, Valentine Debtler, Peter Poff, Valentine Shimmel, Peter Sparling, Elias Hoffmann, and probably others. Several of these had families. According to an Irish tradition some of their friends came for a final leave-taking. Mr. Embury had preached to them in their little chapel in Ballingran, and, as the story goes, he gave them a farewell sermon from the ship. Some of them probably were his converts—seals to his ministry. Doubtless “they sorrowed most of all that they should see his face no more.”

The moment of departure came, and Embury, the Hecks, and their companions receded from the Irish shore. What momentous and eternal interests were involved in that voyage! They arrived in New York harbor on the tenth or

* Dr. Abel Stevens gives the Christian name of Mary to Mrs. Embury. In a legal document preserved in the archives of New York which bears her signature, as executrix of Philip Embury, her name is written Margaret.

eleventh day of August, 1760. The New York *Mercury* of Monday, August 18, 1760, contained a notice of the arrival of some German-Irish emigrants, of whom, beyond reasonable doubt, were the "several poor people," to whom Pilmoor declared was due the origin of Methodism in America. The *Mercury* said: "The ship Perry, Captain Hogan, arrived here on Monday last, in nine weeks from Limerick, in Ireland, with a number of Germans, the fathers of many of them having settled there in the year 1710; but not having sufficient scope in that country chose to try their fortunes in America."

Embury and some of his companions from Ballingran were Methodists. By trade he was a carpenter. As such he assisted in building a Methodist chapel at Court Matrix. At the Conference held by Mr. Wesley at Limerick, in 1758, he was proposed for the itinerancy and placed on Wesley's list of reserves. It does not appear that he was called into the itinerant field, yet in the local sphere he continued his ministry. The church of his fathers probably was the Lutheran, as his ancestors went to Ireland from the Palatinate, in Germany, and it has been said that in New York he united with the Lutheran Church. But it is stated by him and others, in their petition in 1763 to the Governor of New York for land, that they were all of the Church of England. He continued the worship of God in his family, and no doubt attended upon religious ordinances. We may suppose that he did not lose all interest in the work of preaching, but apparently no evidence exists that he preached in New York until the year 1766. Then, in the order of the divine Providence, he was summoned to act as the humble but immortal instrument of projecting the most beneficent and vast religious enterprise which has ever risen on this continent. The emigration hither of those "poor people" marked an epoch in American Christianity. They tarried in the city of New York several years, awaiting an opportunity to obtain a suitable location in the country for their contemplated business project. During this lengthened delay Mrs. Heck and Mr. Embury achieved their illustrious work of founding Methodism in what is now the metropolis of the Western Hemisphere.

CHAPTER IV.

BARBARA HECK, AND HOW SHE BEGAN THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT IN AMERICA.

THE Wesleyan branch of Protestantism was planted in New York by Philip Embury ; but he had lived there above five years before he began the work which has given him a deathless fame. How came he, then, after so long a period, to enter upon the humble but sublime undertaking which has been prolific of results so magnificent and glorious ?

By an extraordinarily well-attested tradition we learn that a godly Wesleyan woman, who was one of the company of German-Irish emigrants from Ballingran, who sailed from Limerick in 1760, namely, Barbara, wife of Paul Heck, found several of her friends playing cards. She stopped their diversion, and then proceeded to see Embury, and effectually implored him to preach. In compliance with her entreaty he soon preached in his dwelling to five auditors. This was the beginning of the Wesleyan movement in New York.

The story of the way that Embury was incited to preach by Mrs. Heck has been preserved with apparently little variation from its original form. Its integrity is probably less impaired than is common with traditions a century and a quarter old. It was publicly related at the dedication of the second John Street Church, in New York, on January 4, 1818. It was printed in the same year in the dedicatory discourse delivered on that day by the Rev. Nathan Bangs. Dr. Bangs has elsewhere said that he wrote out the story for that occasion as he received it from Mr. Paul Hick and his "intelligent wife," Hannah Dean, who was a member of the New York society when Embury and Mrs. Heck were there.

He states that after he had written it, he read it to Mr. and Mrs. Hick, and they pronounced it accurate. Bangs's account, as it appears in the Dedicatory Sermon, is as follows :

“The first Methodist society was formed in this city (which, indeed, was the first in America) in the year 1766. There are some circumstances connected with the commencement and progress of this infant society very interesting to those who take pleasure in reviewing past events, and combining in their review the good hand of God.

“In 1765 it seems there were five emigrants from Ireland, who had been members of the Methodist society there, settled in this city. After their arrival, being among strangers, separated from their Christian acquaintance, and not finding any spiritual associates here, neglecting also the assembling of themselves together, they all except one so far departed from God as to be immersed in the pleasures of sin. Among their number was Mr. Philip Embury, a local preacher. Though he maintained the external character of a Christian after his arrival, he nevertheless in great measure lost the life of God from his soul. In this melancholy state they remained until the year following, when another family, formerly connected in Christian fellowship with those already mentioned before their departure from Ireland, came over. This family brought their piety and zeal with them. Actuated by an ardent love for the Redeemer's honor, the mother of the last-mentioned family, who was also a true mother in Israel, presented herself in the presence of those first mentioned, who were amusing themselves with playing cards, took the cards from them, and with holy indignation committed them to the flames. She then went to Mr. Embury, the local preacher, prostrated herself before him, and entreated him with tears to call a meeting and preach to them, admonishing him if he did not comply with her request the people would go to hell and God would require their blood at his hand. Overcome by her arguments, but not knowing how to carry her request into execution for want of adequate means, the good man asked, ‘Where shall I preach, and to

whom? We have neither house nor congregation.' She replied, 'Preach in your own house, to our own company only.' Accordingly they met at an appointed time, six in all, the preacher and five hearers. In this way, though their number gradually increased, they continued for some time in comparative obscurity.

"The report of a Methodist meeting being established soon began to attract attention, and the number of hearers increasing, the dwelling-house was not sufficiently large to accommodate all who attended. To remedy this defect a room in the neighborhood was rented, and the expense paid by voluntary contributions."

I have seen but one of the thin octavo pamphlets containing this sermon, and that, probably, is almost the only copy which has escaped oblivion.

It will be noticed that Dr. Bangs does not mention the name of the heroine of this tradition in the above narrative. This seems extraordinary, in view of the fact that he was describing the origin of the society which he declared was not only the first in New York, but in America, and which had now come to a new stage in its progress by the erection and dedication of its second house of worship on the old site. The story itself is a very striking representation of valorous deeds performed in a unique way by a Christian woman, who thus displayed an ardent love for souls. The effect, too, of her daring exploit was momentous and enduring. Bangs that day stood among those who had known her, and to her he ascribed the honor of starting the movement which brought the church into existence. Why, then, at that second dedication, and amidst the sacred associations and memories of John Street, should he have suppressed her name?

Bangs is manifestly in error respecting the time of the arrival in New York of the woman who gave to Embury his impulse to preach. He represents her as having arrived from Ireland in 1766, whereas she came with the company that sailed from Limerick in 1760.

A living grandson of Barbara Heck personally recited to

me, in the John Street Church, in New York, October 27, 1890, the tradition, as it is preserved and cherished by her descendants in Canada, of her sudden dispersion of the card-players and her successful appeal to Embury. This grandson, Mr. George Heck, is a son of the late Rev. Samuel Heck, and was born in 1819. He is a gentleman of intelligence, social position and integrity, a member of the Methodist Church of Canada, and resides near Prescott, Ontario, where he has lived more than threescore and ten years among the kindred of his sainted grandmother. This story I recorded as he pronounced it. It is as follows :

“ I have seen John Lawrence, the husband of Philip Embury’s widow, who, while in New York was employed by Paul Heck, probably in a lumber-yard. We do not know that Paul Heck was in the lumber business, but think he was. John Lawrence was present when Mrs. Heck appeared among the card-players and was fond of relating the story of that occurrence. I have frequently heard this John Lawrence’s daughter-in-law, the wife of John Lawrence, second, who was the son of Philip Embury’s wife by her second husband, relate the story as she received it from her father-in-law, *the* John Lawrence who was present when my grandmother, Mrs. Barbara Heck, rebuked the card-players. I was present when John Lawrence, one of this party, died. I saw him die. My eldest sister, Mrs. James Howard, said that she believed from her recollection of the story, as told in the family, that the company played cards in Barbara Heck’s kitchen, and that it was there that she found them and gave them a reproof.

“ John Lawrence, who was present in the card-party, stated to his daughter-in-law, who also was daughter-in-law to Mrs. Philip Embury, that when Mrs. Heck came into the room where the card-players were she lifted a corner of her apron, swept the cards from the table into it with her hand, went to the fire, and cast them from her apron into the flames. Immediately after this she put on her bonnet and went to Philip Embury and said to him : ‘ Philip, you must

preach to us, or we shall all go to hell together, and God will require our blood at your hands ! ’

“ ‘ Where shall I preach ? ’

“ ‘ Preach in your own house.’

“ ‘ Who will come to hear me ? ’

“ ‘ I will come and hear you.’ As a result of this appeal he began to preach in his own house. The first congregation consisted of five hearers and the preacher. The persons who composed it were Philip Embury and his wife, Paul and Barbara Heck, John Lawrence, and Betty, a colored servant of Mr. and Mrs. Heck.”

Such was the small and feeble beginning of the movement which, from that little gathering of “ poor people ” in a mechanic’s humble home, has swept with varying but victorious acceleration over the continent and across the seas ; filling a hemisphere with its sanctuaries and its shoutings, and kindling the radiance of redemption in many heathen lands. A young maiden pressed a key and the rocks of Hell Gate, in the East River, burst into fragments. An obscure Methodist Irishwoman, whose heart was moved by the moral perils of her friends and countrymen, by her brave and decisive action touched a spring which let loose in America the sin-wrecking forces of the Wesleyan revival and shook “ the trembling gates of Hell.” That woman was Barbara Heck, and she has been appropriately called “ the Mother of American Methodism.” Impelled by the spirit within her to dare and to do for God, her timely, heroic, and wonderfully fruitful service has made her name illustrious ; and to her is fulfilled that Scripture which declares, “ They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”

For about four years after Embury began to preach Mrs. Heck continued with the New York Wesleyans. She was a conspicuous and effective agent in erecting the first Methodist chapel in America. There is a tradition, which is not incredible, that she collected money for the building fund. In the list of contributors to that fund the name of her hus-

band—Paul Heck—is prefixed to a subscription of three pounds five shillings. In the entire list, comprising not far from two hundred and fifty names, there are only sixteen that stand for a larger sum. Carroll, in his work on Canadian Methodism, namely, “Case and his Cotemporaries,” says that Mr. and Mrs. Heck “were among the most active promoters of the enterprise of erecting the first ‘preaching-house’ in New York.” He adds: “Mr. Heck was one of the original trustees and Mrs. Heck whitewashed it with her own hands.”

George Heck told me that his grandparents, Paul and Barbara Heck, went from New York City to Camden—or, as it is sometimes said, Salem, in the neighborhood of Ashgrove—New York, in the year 1770, in company with the immortal Philip Embury.* Mr. Heck’s statement is corroborated by a Canadian authority, the Rev. John Carroll, who, in his work on “Case and his Cotemporaries” (vol. i., p. 17), says that “Ashgrove, in the northern part of the State [of New York], near Lake Champlain, had been colonized largely in 1770 by some emigrants from the original New York society, the Hecks and Emburys.” Another fact which corroborates this tradition of their removal in the above year is, that the name of Paul Heck, which occurs several times in the volume of primitive records of Methodism in New York City, commonly known as “the old Book,” appears in it for the last time in February, 1770. That volume, which was the basis of the Rev. J. B. Wakeley’s “Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism,” is now, 1892, in the possession of the venerable Dr. Joseph Longking, of New York, in a state of excellent preservation. Dr. Longking signified to me his purpose to present it to the Methodist Historical Society in the city of New York, which, as I am informed, he has since done.

That the Hecks removed from New York to Camden in the first half of the year 1770 is a fact well established. I learn from George Heck that his father, Samuel—the youngest son of Paul and Barbara Heck—was born at Camden in

* Ashgrove, Salem, Camden, are all neighborhoods in Camden Valley, New York. Either is used to designate Embury’s home.

1771, and that their youngest child, Nancy, was also born there in 1773.

There the Hecks assisted in founding the Wesleyan cause. The first Methodist Society north of the city of New York was formed by Philip Embury, at Ashgrove, probably very soon after he and his friends settled at Camden in 1770. Bishop Asbury, in his *Journal*, August 22, 1795 (vol. ii., p. 275), speaks of Ashgrove, "where," he says, "we have a society of about sixty members. They originated with P. Embury, who left the city of New York when the British preachers came there." A church was built for this society, as the Rev. Dr. Bostwick Hawley informs us, in 1788. When, in July, 1789, Freeborn Garrettson visited Ashgrove and preached, he found there "many kind friends who," he says, "have built us a church." *

Shortly before the outbreak of the American Revolution Paul and Barbara Heck removed from Camden to Montreal. There is an erroneous tradition of their removal to Canada being due to Paul Heck's capture and escape as a soldier of the British army. This story Bishop Merrill, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, received from Mrs. Heck's grandson, John Heck, an elder brother of George Heck. Paul Heck was indeed captured, and he escaped, but did not therefore remove to Canada, as he lived there when he joined the army.

The Rev. Dr. A. W. Cummings was an inmate of the family of Barbara Heck's son Samuel, in the summers of 1824 and 1825, at Mrs. Heck's last homestead, and he says: "In 1774 Paul and Barbara Heck, with their five children, Elizabeth, John, and Jacob, born in New York in the years 1765, 1767, and 1769, and Samuel and Nancy, born in Camden Valley in 1771 and 1773, left their second American home and located in Montreal. The only incidents worthy of note during their fourteen years' residence in Montreal were the marriage of Miss Elizabeth to Mr. Owen Bower, the early death of Miss Nancy, the other daughter, and the enlistment of Paul Heck in a volunteer corps in the British army."

* *The Experience and Travels of Freeborn Garrettson*, p. 233.

Dr. Cummings says George Heck "never left home, was the executor of his father, has held all his papers and those of his grandfather, Paul Heck, also." George Heck, on May 24, 1884, wrote: "My grandfather, Paul Heck, did join a volunteer corps for one year. His discharge is now before me. It bears date, Quebec, August 24, 1778, signed by Robert Leake, General Haldimand, Commander-in-chief." George Heck confirms the account of the capture of his grandfather, as given upon his elder brother John's authority by Bishop Merrill, but he says it did not occur while Paul Heck was visiting at home. George also says: "My grandfather volunteered in Canada and after his escape returned to his home." His residence was then in the city of Montreal. Paul Heck, like Mr. Wesley, was loyal to the British crown.

In 1785, according to Carroll, in "Case and his Contemporaries," though Dr. Cummings says it was in 1788, Paul and Barbara Heck left Montreal, with their two sons, John and Samuel, and settled in the township of Augusta, Upper Canada, now the province of Ontario. As a reward of Paul Heck's loyalty to George III., he and all his children then living drew two hundred acres of land each, in Augusta. Some of the patents for these lands are yet in George Heck's possession. Lot No. 14, near Big Creek, in Augusta township, was, according to Dr. Cummings, drawn by Samuel Heck. It was decided that he should remain upon it with, and care for, his father and mother, Paul and Barbara. Carroll, however, states that Mr. and Mrs. Heck settled on "Lot No. 4, third concession, in the neighborhood of Big Creek." Here they lived the remainder of Paul Heck's days.

A Methodist class was now formed in Augusta, of which Paul and Barbara Heck, John Lawrence, and his wife Margaret, formerly Mrs. Philip Embury, "and others who were of the first class formed in America by Embury were members." Thus, without a preacher, these same people organized Methodism in Upper Canada, now Ontario. This class was under the leadership of Samuel Embury, son of Philip, and, it is believed, was the first society of Methodists formed in Canada.

On the farm of his son Samuel, Paul Heck died, not in 1792, as Dr. Cummings asserts, and as is also recorded on his tomb, but at a date somewhat later. The exact date of his decease, however, is not determined, but probably it was in 1795. It is certain he did not die before 1794 nor later than 1795. A copy of his will, legally attested, which I have seen, shows that the instrument was executed February 22, 1794, and was admitted to probate April 2, 1795. Some time between those two dates the venerable testator died, probably in March of the latter year.

Soon after Paul Heck's decease, his son Samuel, as Dr. Cummings informs us, "sold the farm on Big Creek and purchased a tract of six hundred acres, almost directly in front, on the St. Lawrence River. He here built a comfortable residence, to which, with his mother, he removed in 1799. Here Mrs. Barbara Heck spent the remainder of her life, enjoying the confidence and love of all her kindred and of the numerous friends who recognized her as the 'foundress,' as Dr. Abel Stevens most appropriately denominates her, of American Methodism." *

The great Methodist harvest in America sprung from wind-wafted seed from Ireland. According to the eleventh census—1890—there are in the territory of the American Union over forty-six thousand Methodist churches, valued at above one hundred and thirty-two millions of dollars, exclusive of parsonages, with considerably over four and a half millions of communicants. Besides there are vast multitudes of adherents who are not members. The census of 1890 also shows that the Methodist membership comprises over one-third of the total number of Protestant communicants in the United States. Almost a third of all the church edifices of the country, including the Roman Catholic, are Methodist, and of the Protestant Church buildings the Methodists have eight thousand in excess of a third of the whole. Such is the mighty result, though only in part, of the spiritual

* For important facts in Mrs. Heck's history after her removal from the city of New York in 1770, I am indebted to Dr. Cummings's interesting article in the *New York Christian Advocate*, January 8, 1885.

impulse imparted by Barbara Heck to Philip Embury in 1766.

In a humble hamlet in Ireland, amidst the holy and inspiring influences kindled by Wesley and his preachers, Barbara Heck received the preparation for the epoch-creating work which she was destined to accomplish in America. Her loyalty to Christ and her zeal for righteousness led her to impel into motion the religious forces which have proved so potent in this land and have produced results of such amazing glory and grandeur. The feebleness of the instrument and the smallness of the beginning, when contrasted with the vast magnitude of the achievement as seen in its results, are sufficient evidence that she was directed by divine wisdom and that the work which she began was of God.

Mrs. Heck's movement developed in less than two decades into the ecclesiastical organization called the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which Church her last years were worthily spent. From its communion she suddenly ascended to "the Saint's Everlasting Rest."

"The old Heck house," says the Rev. Dr. W. H. Withrow, "near Maitland, is a large stone structure, built in the quaint Norman style common to French Canada, with massive walls three feet thick. At the back is the old orchard where Barbara Heck died, sitting in her chair beneath an apple-tree, with her German Bible on her knees. In full view sweeps the noble St. Lawrence, and on the opposite side is the American shore. It seems as if in death as in life she belongs to both countries, in which, in the providence of God, she was the means of planting Methodism. Our Canadian Barbara Heck, the friend of Philip Embury, who collected money for old John Street Church, New York, and white-washed it with her own hands." *

* New York Christian Advocate, February 25, 1886.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW YORK HEROINE'S IDENTITY, CHARACTER, AND DEATH.

IT was known to the original Methodist society in New York that Barbara Heck incited Philip Embury to preach there in 1766. Some time afterward a certain Paul Hick became a member of the society, and the story of Mrs. Heck's work was changed by the substitution therein of Paul Hick's mother for Paul Heck's wife. It will be remembered that only five persons heard Embury's first sermon in his "hired house." They all removed from New York, with the possible exception of Betty, the colored servant, whose history I have not traced. In their absence the change in the tradition occurred.

This change resulted in a controversy respecting the identity of the woman who roused Embury to evangelical action. The debate began in 1858 in this way: The Rev. J. B. Wakeley published in that year his book known as "Lost Chapters," in writing which he met the Heck-Embury tradition and attempted to set it forth. He understood that the heroine of the unique story was the mother of Paul Hick, and as a letter from his hand now in my possession shows, he had never heard that Paul Heck and his wife Barbara had ever been connected with the society in New York. He therefore fell into error concerning the initial act in the great Methodist drama in America. His assertions were challenged from Canada in the New York *Christian Advocate*. He replied and rejoinders followed. The result was the dispersion of the mist which had obscured the name and the personality of Barbara Heck, and the bringing into view the woman who projected the Wesleyan cause in this country.

The first time, apparently, that the Heck-Embury tradition appeared in print was in 1818, in the sermon Nathan Bangs preached at the dedication of the second John Street Church in New York. In 1823 the story was published anonymously in the *Methodist Magazine* as a part of a series of articles on "The Introduction of Methodism into the United States." Dr. Stevens, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," erroneously ascribes those articles to the Rev. P. P. Sandford. Dr. Bangs, in the *Christian Advocate* of April 15, 1858, said of the articles: "I wrote them myself and published them in the *Methodist Magazine*, in 1823, while I was editor of that work." The substance of the Heck tradition was incorporated by Bangs into the first volume of his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church." In the New York *Christian Advocate* of October 28, 1858, Dr. Bangs revealed the sources whence he derived this tradition. "I have to say," he says, "that I did receive the account in Canada from Samuel Heck of Augusta, Upper Canada, and thought at the time it was correct. But on coming to New York in 1810 I became acquainted with Paul Hick and his family and received the account from him and his wife. When in 1817 the second John Street Church was to be dedicated, and I was requested to preach the dedication sermon, I went to Paul Hick and took down the account from him, assisted by his pious and intelligent wife, and then took my notes home, wrote them out in full, and returned and read them to Paul Hick and his wife. They pronounced them all correct. These were read at the time I preached the dedication sermon in John Street, and soon after they were published."

Some years *after* Dr. Bangs published the Heck-Embury tradition, in his John Street dedication sermon, and also in the *Methodist Magazine*, and several years *before* he published it in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," he issued "The Life of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson." In the Introduction to that work he says: "By the earnest entreaties of Mrs. Paul Hick, a pious matron, Mr. Embury very reluctantly commenced preaching." This is a correct

statement of Mrs. Heck's relation to the beginning of Embury's gospel labors in New York, but there is a slight error in the spelling of her family name. Dr. Bangs says that the woman who went to Embury with "earnest entreaties," was Mrs. Paul Hick, whereas she was in reality Mrs. Paul Heck. If the letter e were substituted for the letter i in the name, the statement would be perfectly accurate. Bangs possibly overlooked the slight difference in the orthography of the names.

It is not known that there was a Mrs. Paul Hick in New York when Embury was a resident of that city, nor is such a supposition at all warranted. The woman who it is said Paul Hick declared was instrumental in beginning the Wesleyan movement there was his *mother*, not his wife. There was a Conference in New York, in 1859, between John and George Heck, grandsons of Barbara, the Rev. John Carroll, of Canada, and the Rev. J. B. Wakeley—Dr. Abel Stevens and Bishop Janes being also present—at which Dr. Wakeley said in writing that Mrs. Hick's "Christian and maiden names are not certainly known." I have seen an autograph letter of a grandson of Paul Hick, in which he likewise says that neither the Christian nor the maiden name of Paul Hick's mother are retained. None of the Irish authorities appear to have discovered anything of much moment about either Mrs. Hick or her husband. Her identity, indeed, seems almost lost in the obscurity which surrounds her.

Now, in saying, in his biography of Garrettson, that "Mrs. Paul Hick" gave to Philip Embury his impulse to preach, Dr. Bangs seems to have adhered to the Canadian version of the tradition. Neither in his printed John Street dedication sermon, nor in the *Methodist Magazine*, nor yet in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," does he give the name of the woman who dispersed the card-party, and then effectually besought Embury to preach. It was in the interval between the publication of the first two and the last one of those writings that Bangs announced the woman's name in his work on Garrettson. It would seem that in the sermon in 1818, in the Magazine in 1823, and in the History

in 1839, he did not adopt either the Canadian or the New York version of the tradition concerning the person who led Embury to the pulpit ; while in 1829 he was so far favorable to the Canada version that he wrote the woman's name as Mrs. Paul Hick, which, except a single letter in the spelling, was accurate.

Justice requires that, in so far as he is known to have spoken for himself in relation to this matter, Dr. Bangs should be heard in his own language. He says : " I had reason to believe from the established character of Paul Hick, as a member of the Church, a trustee, and a class leader, that he told me the truth ; and therefore I concluded that Samuel Heck of Canada was under an innocent mistake, for he no doubt thought he had told me the truth. That one or the other of them was mistaken is certain, and I am inclined to believe that Paul Hick of New York, who professed to *know* the facts he gave to me, which were corroborated by his wife, was correct in his statements. These formed the basis of the account which I published in the Magazine, in 1823, and in my History, in 1839." *

But, prior to his narration of the story in either of those publications, Bangs gave it publicity, as I have shown, in his John Street dedicatory sermon, in 1818. Thus we have four several accounts by him of the origin of Methodism in New York in an equal number of publications, issued respectively in 1818, 1823, 1829, and 1839. In the Introduction to the " Life of Garrettson," in 1829, Bangs says : " To ascertain the truth the writer took much pains some years since, by conversing with several of the aged members of the [New York] society, all of whom have since been called to their reward in heaven, who distinctly remembered the first rise of the society, and took a grateful delight in rehearsing the circumstances attending its formation and progress." In the sermon as published, which he preached on the occasion of the John Street dedication, January 4, 1818, his statement concerning Mrs. Heck is contrary to that which he inserted in his History, over a score of years later. I will now exhibit,

* Dr. Bangs's letter in New York Christian Advocate, October 28, 1858.

in parallel columns, Dr. Bangs's remarks as they related to Mrs. Heck, in the dedication sermon in 1818, and his contrary statement about the mother of Paul Hick, in his History, in 1839. Neither in the Sermon nor the History does he name the heroine of his story in the text, but he identifies her in each work in a note in the margin, which foot-notes I shall now reproduce in connection with the text.

BANGS IN THE JOHN STREET DEDICATORY SERMON, IN 1818, RESPECTING MRS. HECK.

Persevering in their conscientious efforts to promote the present and future welfare of their fellowmen, this place [the rigging loft] also became insufficient to contain the people who assembled with them. They therefore began to think seriously of erecting a house of worship. In this pious design, however, they seemed to meet with insuperable difficulties. Most of the society being poor, they had not the requisite means for such an undertaking. While all were deliberating upon the proper course to be pursued to accomplish their design, an elderly lady, one of the emigrants, and a worthy member of the society, while earnestly engaged in prayer to God for aid and direction, received with inexpressible sweetness this answer: "I, the Lord, will do it." At the same time a plan of operation presenting itself to her mind, she encouraged them to proceed.*

Bangs's foot-note to the above is as follows:

* This worthy disciple of Christ, whose well-directed zeal contributed so much toward the prosperity of this so-

BANGS IN THE "HISTORY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH," IN 1839, RESPECTING MRS. HICK.

In consequence of the accession of members to the society and hearers of the word, the rigging loft also became too small, and hence they began to consult together on the propriety of building a house of worship. But for the accomplishment of this undertaking many difficulties were to be encountered. The members of the society were yet few in number, and most of them of the poorer class, and of course had but a limited acquaintance and influence in the community. For some time a painful suspense kept them undetermined which way to act. But while all were deliberating on the most suitable means to be adopted to accomplish an end so desirable and even necessary to their continued prosperity, an elderly lady,* one of the Irish emigrants before mentioned, while fervently engaged in prayer for direction in this important enterprise, received with inexpressible sweetness and power this answer, "I, the Lord, will do it." At the same time a plan was presented to her mind, which, on being presented to the society,

ciety, removed from this city to Ashgrove, and from thence to Upper Canada, where she ended her mortal life in the triumph of faith. It seems she had frequently prayed for a sudden death. Sitting with her spectacles on, the Bible and Hymn-Book on her lap, and raising her hands toward heaven, she shouted, "*Glory to God*," and fell dead. The author, while travelling in Upper Canada, preached in the house where this eminent saint thus ended her pilgrimage, and received from her son, who was a worthy member of our Church, the above account of his mother.

was generally approved of, and finally adopted.

Bangs's foot-note to the above is as follows :

* The name of this pious woman was Hick, the mother of the late Paul Hick, who became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in his youth, and was subsequently a class leader and trustee, in which offices he continued until near the close of his life, and finally died in the triumphs of faith in the seventy-fourth year of his age. He has children and grandchildren, now members of the Church in the city of New York. He has often conversed with the writer respecting the circumstances and incidents of those early days of Methodism, with much apparent delight and gratitude. When quite a lad his mother used to lead him by the hand to the meetings ; and, said he, "The first sixpence I could ever call my own I put into the plate which was carried around to receive the contributions of the people, and I felt in so doing an inexpressible pleasure." God abundantly rewarded him in after life, with both temporal and spiritual blessings, and he lived to see this "seed of the Kingdom spring up and bear fruit even a hundredfold." Several of the facts above narrated were received by the writer from Mr. Hick and other members of his family.

It is remarkable that Dr. Bangs should have declared, in his John Street dedicatory sermon, that the woman who was the inspiring agent in the erection of the first Methodist Church in New York was she who removed to Ashgrove, and thence to Canada, where she suddenly died in her chair—which woman was none other than Barbara, *wife* of Paul Heck—and that then, more than twenty years later, he should have said in his History that the woman in question was the *mother* of Paul Hick.

At the time Bangs published his sermon, Paul Hick and Hannah Dean, his wife, were living, and he declares he wrote this story, as he obtained it from them, and that it was

read at the dedication, he having previously read it to them and received their confirmation of its accuracy. When in his History, above twenty years afterward, he said that this notable woman was the mother of Paul Hick, the said Paul Hick had been fourteen years dead. Thus, when he had received the account fresh from Mr. and Mrs. Hick's lips, and when both were yet living in New York, he there published, in the sermon foot-note, that the woman of whom he spoke in the text was Barbara Heck, of Canada, and then, when they had long been dead, he, above a score of years later, said she was Paul Hick's mother. Between the dates of these two publications, namely, in 1829, Bangs published his "Life of Garrettson," in the Introduction to which he declared that the woman who induced Embury to preach in New York was "Mrs. Paul Hick."

The change in this tradition was effected in New York at a comparatively early period, probably within two or three decades after Mrs. Heck's removal from the city. We find it in its changed form in the following passage from an early historical document, namely, Peter Parks's "Statement of the Rise of Methodism in America:" "Sister Hick, mother of Paul Hick, who resided opposite the barracks, persuaded Mr. Emmery [Embury] to have preaching in his house, and he accordingly called the neighbors together for preaching."

Dr. Bangs put the case respecting the tradition as related to him by both Samuel Heck and Paul Hick, thus: "That one or the other was mistaken is certain." Let us now see if we can ascertain on which side the mistake lay.

First. The fact that so little is known concerning the mother of Paul Hick indicates that she died when Paul was young. Had she lived until he grew out of childhood it is improbable that he would have failed to embalm her name in the records of his family. He is said to have claimed that his mother was also "the mother of American Methodism." His children and later descendants would have proudly cherished her name as that of, in their belief, the foremost Methodist heroine of this continent, had he made it known to them orally or in writing. Paul Hick lived until 1825, and

had he known her name it surely would have been retained in his family until 1858, when the controversy arose concerning her relation to the origin of Methodism in America.

Of the time or circumstances of the death of the mother of Paul Hick we know nothing save the tradition as given by Dr. Wakeley in his "Lost Chapters" as follows: "Mrs. Hick died many years ago in the triumphs of our holy religion, and was buried in Trinity Church-yard in New York. No stone or monument tells where her precious dust is sleeping." The absence of identification of her burial-place strongly suggests that her death occurred when her son Paul was a child. Had he known where her body was consigned to dust is it likely that he would have failed to keep the spot in tender and sacred memory, or to visit it and to lead his children to her grave? It is understood that he possessed competent means. Had he then known where was his mother's sleeping-place—the mother whose supposed heroic and historic deeds he fondly narrated—would he have failed to distinguish it by some appropriate "monumental stone?"

On the apparently well-based assumption that Paul Hick's mother died while he was yet too young to remember her name, it may be supposed that he did not hear much directly from her about the circumstances connected with the beginning of Embury's great work. I have not seen any statement that *she* ever said she confounded the card-players and impelled Embury to the pulpit. However, her family seem to have believed her to have been the person who performed those works.

Second. In this belief they were mistaken, as is shown by the following evidence:

(1) There lived in Ireland a maiden named Barbara Ruckle, daughter of Sebastian Ruckle. She married Paul Heck, with whom she came to America in 1760. The Rev. William Crook, in his work on "Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism," has made these facts clear, and placed them above dispute. On the other hand, we get no word from beyond the sea respecting the ancestry, or even the identity, of the mother of Paul Hick.

(2) Barbara Heck wrote to a friend in Ireland an account of her work in originating Methodism in New York. The Rev. William Crook, in the above-mentioned book, says: "Mrs. Heck sent a letter from New York to a friend in Balingran in which she gave an account of the transaction. This letter was preserved for many years, and old Mrs. Ruckle told me she had often read it and had it in her possession for a long time. It was subsequently taken to America by Mr. Christopher Ruckle, who emigrated some years since, and settled, I think, in Ohio."

It will not be irrelevant to indicate here who this "old Mrs. Ruckle" was. This I will do in Mr. Crook's words: "Mrs. Heck's house is still standing in venerable age. When I first saw it old Mrs. Barbara Ruckle, connected by marriage with Mrs. Heck, lived in it, and a grand old woman she was as I have met with since. When I saw it last she was gone to join her kindred in the house above. She had so much individuality of character that she stands out alone before my mind, in many respects unlike any one else whom I have ever known. She bore Mrs. Heck's honored name, Barbara Ruckle, lived in her house, and caught her mantle too. I fancy that Mrs. Heck was just such another woman." *

Such was the witness who told Mr. Crook that she had long held in her possession, and often had read, a letter from Barbara Heck, in which the latter related the story of her relation to the beginning of the Wesleyan movement in this land.

Christopher Ruckle, who, as Crook states, emigrated from Ireland and went to Ohio in 1848, settled at Maumee, near Toledo. He is dead; but the statement of "Old Mrs. Ruckle" that he took Mrs. Heck's letter to America is confirmed by his daughter, Mrs. Sarah Whidden. In a letter from Mrs. Whidden, in my possession, of the date of January 19, 1890, she says: "Father had the Barbara Heck letter. Father showed the letter to several in Maumee and thought he lost it in some books that he lent. The ministers of the Methodist Church came for the letter after it was lost. Father told them

* Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism, by the Rev. William Crook.

he could tell them almost word for word of the letter. Mrs. Heck was a great-grandaunt of mine."

In a subsequent letter, also in my possession, dated Presque Isle, O., March 4, 1890, Mrs. Whidden gives the substance of that which Mrs. Heck wrote. She says: "As to that letter that father had, it was written by Barbara Heck herself. The words, as near as I know, were—Mrs. Heck went to the house and found her countrymen playing cards. She took the cards out of their hands and threw them into the fire. Then she spoke to Mr. Embury and told him that he must speak to the people, and if he did not their souls would be required at his hands. He spoke to her and said, I have neither house nor congregation. She told him to preach in his own house first and she would find a congregation. So she went among her countrymen and spoke to them. There were but six at the first meeting. This is all that I remember about the letter."

Thus we have explicit testimony from a witness of high character in Ireland, now dead, and also from a living daughter of Christopher Ruckle, both connected with the family of Mrs. Heck, that Barbara Heck wrote an epistolary document which was long preserved, in which she related the thrilling story of her inauguration of the Wesleyan reformation in America.

(3) Barbara Heck also related the same story orally. This presumptively is shown first of all by Dr. Bangs, who says that Samuel Heck, a son of Barbara Heck, told him that his mother was the instrument of originating Methodism in New York. Samuel Coate, an eloquent Methodist preacher, went to Canada as a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1796, and thereafter, during the continuance of his ministry, he was chiefly in that country. At about the close of the eighteenth century he married Ann Dulmage, whose parents came to America with the Emburys and the Hecks. In Baltimore, where Mr. Coate was then preaching, Bishop Asbury, in his Journal, under the date of August 7, 1802, made this record, namely: "The wife of our brother, Samuel Coate, had a daughter born to her,

whom I baptized, naming her Sophia." As Barbara Heck lived two years after the birth of this child, it is apparent that Mrs. Coate, who was from the Heck locality in Canada, had good knowledge of her. Concerning Barbara Heck, she gave this testimony: "I often overheard Mrs. Heck relate to my mother the circumstances of the recovery of the back-slidden, card-playing Methodists, and the arousal of Philip Embury to preach through her instrumentality. As I was the wife of the Rev. Samuel Coate I was acquainted with the Rev. Nathan Bangs when he labored in this country [Canada] and have reason to believe that he knew the Heck family well."

Mrs. Sarah Dulmage, whose husband, I think, was a brother of Mrs. Coate, declared, in August, 1858, over her own signature, that she knew Barbara Heck, and knew her, too, as a woman of high Christian character, and had "often heard her relate the incidents" of the cards and Embury "years and years before any account was published." At the time Mrs. Dulmage gave this testimony she was eighty years old, and therefore she must have been twenty-six when Barbara Heck died. Thus we have the testimony of credible witnesses to the fact that Mrs. Heck orally said she "stirred up Embury to preach."

(4) The claim of Mrs. Heck is supported by witnesses of the facts. We have seen that John Lawrence, who became the husband of Philip Embury's widow, was present when Barbara Heck in New York stopped the card-playing of her friends. John Lawrence, son of the above John Lawrence and of the former Mrs. Embury, in a letter which the Rev. G. G. Saxe, now of Madison, N. J., had in his possession, and a portion of which he published in the New York *Christian Advocate* in 1858, bore testimony to Barbara Heck's agency in arousing Philip Embury to evangelistic activity. In that letter John Lawrence says: "My father was present when Barbara Heck, wife of Paul Heck, who both emigrated to Canada, threw the cards into the fire and said, 'Philip, you must preach to us.'"

In a letter to the Rev. John Carroll this same John Law-

rence says: "I have heard my father, who was husband to the late Philip Embury's wife, say it was Barbara Heck, who emigrated to Canada, that threw the cards into the fire and exhorted Philip Embury to go and preach or they would all be lost. Mrs. Lawrence confirms the above statement by what she heard from her mother, who was a sister of Paul Heck, the husband of Barbara. Edward Dulmage, whose mother also was a child of Mrs. Embury, has heard his parents relate the same circumstances." These testimonies, except the Saxe letter, were published by the Rev. John Carroll in the *New York Christian Advocate* of September 30 and October 7, 1858.

Thus, as we see, there is decisive proof that with both pen and voice Mrs. Heck declared she dispersed a group of card-players, flung the cards into the flames, and then implored Philip Embury to preach. Furthermore, we know she dwelt near to Embury in Camden Valley, New York, and afterward she lived near to Mrs. Embury on the river St. Lawrence. John Lawrence, who witnessed her abrupt intrusion into the group who were playing cards, was also her neighbor in the latter place, and Samuel Embury, son of Philip and Margaret Embury, was her class-leader there. In a word, she passed most of her days, after her removal from New York, among the people who knew whether her story about her relation to the origin of Methodism in America was true or false. John Lawrence, who married Mrs. Embury, declared that her story was true. He saw her destroy the cards and he was at Embury's first meeting in New York. This John Lawrence lived so long that the yet surviving grandson of Barbara Heck, namely, George Heck, saw him and remembers seeing him die. Throughout all this time John Lawrence could not have been a victim of an illusion on this point, nor can we believe that he gave testimony so long to a falsehood. Besides, his wife, who, when these events occurred, was Mrs. Philip Embury, could not have been ignorant of the facts, and her son John Lawrence testifies, as we have just seen, to the accuracy of Barbara Heck's narrative. Had Mrs. Heck's story been false there were those near by her

who could have exposed its untruthfulness. There can be no doubt that they knew her story to be true, nor that they confirmed it by their testimony.

(5) The Heck-Embury tradition, as it was held in both New York and Canada, retained the one and only Christian name of its heroine, which was Barbara. Dr. Wakeley, in his "Lost Chapters," wrote of the woman in question under the name of *Barbara*. It thus appears that the tradition in New York preserved her Christian name, even though it otherwise, by mistake as we assume, despoiled her of her historical identity. Wherever we find this tradition, whether in Ireland, or New York, or Canada, no Christian name of its heroine is heard but Barbara. It was Barbara who wrote the story to a friend in Ireland. It was ever Barbara in Wakeley's "Lost Chapters" which represents the New York version of the tradition. It was Barbara in the last Will and Testament of Paul Heck in 1794. The following passages from that instrument will show: "I give and bequeath to Barbara, my dearly beloved wife, this house wherein I now dwell and all the movables therein, to be hers and at her command as long as she lives." Other bequests he likewise made to her. In regard to the executors of his will, Paul Heck therein said: "For the faithful performance hereof I appoint and ordain John Dulmage of Edwardsburg and my son Samuel Heck to be executors of this my last will and testament. I also constitute Barbara my wife executrix of this my testament in connection with the two before mentioned." The names of the witnesses affixed to this will are Darius Dunham, John Dulmage, and John Heck. The first of these was a preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who at the time he put his signature to this testamentary document was in the service of his denomination in Canada. The fact that Dunham was a witness to the will indicates that Paul and Barbara Heck, in their advanced age, confided in and stood closely related to the Methodist preachers. Although the mother of Paul Hick has left behind her no Christian name, yet wherever this tradition has been met it bears the name Barbara. The reason for this, I think, is

found only in the fact that though for many years the real person in that historic drama was lost to view in New York, her *Christian* name had become so embalmed in the story of her heroic deeds that *it* could not perish.

(6) The story told by Mrs. Heck of her relation to the beginning of Methodism in New York was either true or false. If false, she was conscious of its falseness. The testimony is explicit and incontrovertible that Barbara Heck asserted, both in writing and orally, that she rebuked a group of men at cards in New York and then besought Philip Embury to interpose his ministry for their salvation. Was her story false? If so, she cannot be exculpated by the hypothesis that she was innocently mistaken. If what she said of her relation to the origin of Methodism in New York was not true, she was a deliberate liar; and as such she lived and died. Can this be believed? By the testimony of those who knew her long and well her character is shown to have been of a high model of blamelessness and excellence. She gave proof, down to the end, of her loyalty to God and to truth, and she died with God's book of truth upon her person. Dr. Bangs himself described her as "an eminent saint." The idea of her testifying to a lie through all the last thirty-eight years of her life is utterly incredible.

Moreover, if Mrs. Heck's story were false, her associates, such as John Lawrence, the Emburys, and her husband Paul were also guilty of lying. Apparently no stain is upon their names. They lived in the esteem of their people, and they sleep the sleep of the just. It is absurd to think that they were in collusion to support Barbara Heck to the end in maintaining a lie. The soul of candor revolts from a suggestion so shocking. No, Mrs. Heck knew whereof she affirmed and her testimony was true. John Lawrence knew the truth of her story by having witnessed the destruction of the cards by her hand, and for more than half a century he testified to the truthfulness of her narrative. Lawrence's wife, who prior to her marriage to him was the widow of the illustrious Embury, left the tradition in its integrity of Mrs. Heck's agency in starting Methodism in New York. Surely these all were

not deceivers. Beyond all question their testimony to Barbara Heck's instrumentality in originating the Wesleyan movement in America was true.

They who knew the truth of her story sleep with her in the graveyard near "the old blue church" on the banks of the St. Lawrence. In October, 1884, the Rev. Dr. W. H. Withrow made, as he says, a pilgrimage to her grave. "On a white marble slab is the following inscription: 'In memory of Paul Heck: born 1730, died 1792;'* and under it 'Barbara, wife of Paul Heck, born 1734; died August 17, 1804.' Near by are the graves of seventeen other members of the Heck family. To the members of this godly family the promised blessing, even length of days, was strikingly vouchsafed. On six graves lying side by side I noted the following ages: seventy-three; seventy-eight; seventy-eight; fifty-three; seventy-five; fifty-nine. On others I noted the following ages: sixty-three; sixty-two; seventy; seventy. I observed also the grave of a little Barbara Heck, aged three years and six months. Near the grave of Barbara Heck, the foundress of Methodism in the New World, is that of her life-long companion the beautiful Margaret Switzer, who at the age of sixteen married Philip Embury, and after his death married John Lawrence—a pious Methodist who left Ireland with Embury. His grave is beside that of his wife."†

In this visit to the Heck shrine Dr. Withrow saw "the old German black-letter Bible" on which the eyes of Barbara Heck rested just before her transition from earth to glory. "It bears," he says, "the clearly written inscription 'Paul Heck, sein buch, item gegeben darin zu lernon die Niederreiche sprache. Amen.'"

Her grandson, Mr. George Heck, has told me that Barbara Heck died on a summer day while sitting in the grounds of her home on the banks of the St. Lawrence. The sudden and mournful event occurred August 17, 1804. No one was with her at the moment but her grandson, John Heck, then

* As is shown on page 57, this date of Paul Heck's death is inaccurate.

† Dr. Withrow's article, "More about Barbara Heck," *Christian Advocate*, New York, February 25, 1886.

a small boy, who, in his old age, told Bishop Merrill he was a witness of her death. She apparently had been reading her Bible, which was found with her when her demise was discovered. She had slipped partly or wholly from her chair, seemingly by a gentle movement, and she was not, for God took her. Her Bible was found in a position which indicated that it had lain upon her lap. Thus, refreshed with God's Word, she quickly passed into his presence, leaving to the Church of her founding and of her love a record of heroic deeds, and an example of beautiful womanly and Christian virtues.

In the discourse of Nathan Bangs at the dedication of the second John Street Church, in a foot-note, as we have seen, he describes Mrs. Heck's death thus: "It seems she had frequently prayed for a sudden death. Sitting with her spectacles on, the Bible and hymn-book on her lap, and raising her hands toward heaven, she shouted '*Glory to God,*' and fell dead. The author, while travelling in Upper Canada, preached in the house where this eminent saint thus ended her pilgrimage."

Barbara Heck's grave is beside that of the husband who was blest and honored by her long companionship, close to the old blue church in Augusta, near Maitland and Prescott, on the St. Lawrence.

Her religious character was positive. It sheds lustre upon the Methodism to which it bears an imperishable relation. It was of the true Wesleyan experimental and practical type. Her granddaughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Howard, on August 25, 1858, over her signature, related the following testimony concerning her sainted grandparents, Paul and Barbara Heck:

"I have reason to believe that both my grandparents lived holily and died in the Lord. My own mother often heard my grandmother [Barbara Heck] say that she was converted at the age of eighteen years, and that she never lived a whole day without a satisfactory evidence of her acceptance in the Beloved. I have cause to believe that she was utterly incapable of an untruth."

Mrs. Ann McLean, whose first husband was Samuel

Coate, one of the most powerful and popular of the preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in his day, bore testimony to Mrs. Heck's goodness thus :

"My maiden name was Dulmage and my parents were of the number of German-Irish emigrants, some of whom constituted the first Methodist society in the city of New York. I knew Barbara Heck, once of New York and late of Canada. She was apparently a very good woman."

The Rev. Joseph Bass, who, according to a Canadian Methodist historian—the Rev. John Carroll—was "a highly respectable local preacher, a man of intelligence, and who was appointed leader of the second class ever formed in his part of Canada" (Ontario), delivered this testimony :

"I knew the late Paul and Barbara Heck. They had been in the country (near Prescott) three or four years before I came here nearly seventy years ago. They had been Methodists before coming here. They were members of the first class that I ever joined, of which Samuel Embury, son of the celebrated Philip, was the leader. Mr. and Mrs. Heck were most blameless characters and continued faithful to the end. I often heard them speak of being members of the New York society and I heard something about Mrs. Heck being the means of starting the society."

These testimonies give assurance that Mrs. Heck's was a spotless character of exalted worth. Her faith was shown by her works and particularly in the vast and sublime service she rendered to Christianity in opening the Wesleyan Pentecost in the New World.

Mrs. Heck's birthplace was Ballingran, Ireland. Her father, Sebastian Ruckle, lived and died in the house in which she was born. "It is still standing, in venerable age, apparently with sufficient stamina to be an ornament and prominent attraction of Ballingran for many years to come." * When Barbara Ruckle married Paul Heck she exchanged this residence for his house, "which stood not very far from our little church, and every trace of which has long since

* Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism. By the Rev. William Crook, London, 1866, p. 78.

passed away. There is nothing very particular about Mrs. Heck's house. It is an ordinary comfortable cottage with a garden before the door. It will interest many to know that the Methodist ministers are still hospitably entertained in the house which was the birthplace of Barbara Heck." *

The Rev. William Case was an eminent Methodist preacher and a fellow-laborer in Canada of the Rev. Nathan Bangs in the early years of the nineteenth century. In 1855 Case wrote a letter to the latter, which Dr. Abel Stevens has reproduced in the first volume of his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church." It shows that Case gave full credence to the tradition of Barbara Heck's relation to the origin of the Wesleyan cause in New York City. It also bears testimony to the character of the family of which she was the honored mother. In this letter to Dr. Bangs, Case, of whom Stevens says "there has been no better authority in Canadian Methodist history," wrote this notable passage: "You will remember the names of Samuel and Jacob Heck of Augusta, and the Emburys of the Bay of Quinte—the former the sons of Paul Heck and his *worthy* companion, *the parents of Methodism in the city of New York* and America. The parents are gone, and the sons have followed them in the way of holiness to Glory."

Having thus established the identity of Barbara Heck, and traced her history down to the tomb, I now take leave of her, the true woman, the blameless Christian, the honored wife, the saintly mother of a godly seed, the mother also of American Methodism, a disciple who was faithful unto death, and whose name will live and shine illustrious and potent for righteousness as long as the sun and the moon endure.

* Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism. By the Rev. William Crook, London, 1866, p. 78.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LABORS OF EMBURY AND WEBB WITH THE SOCIETY IN NEW YORK PRIOR TO 1770, AND THE ERECTION OF JOHN STREET PREACHING-HOUSE.

ROUSED to evangelical activity by Mrs. Heck's persuasive pleading Philip Embury had the joy of beholding the rise and progress of a new religious reformation in his adopted city.

To him belongs the distinction of having preached the first Wesleyan sermon in New York, and also of forming the first society of Methodists in this country. Beginning with an audience of five persons he soon was compelled to find a larger place for the increasing numbers that came to his meetings.

According to Peter Parks, Embury lived in an upper room in Barracks Street. There has been some discussion concerning the exact locality of that street, and whether it was the street afterward known by the name of Augustus. But Parks—who the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper says was five years old when Methodism began in New York, and became a member of the original society “when quite a youth”—distinctly declares in his “True Statement” that Embury lived in Barracks Street, “ten doors from the barracks, now called Augusta [Augustus] Street.” Parks also says that the woman who “persuaded Mr. Embury to have preaching in his house resided opposite the barracks.” As he lived in the city, and as his grandmother and mother were among the early members of the society, and as he must have been nine years old when Embury left New York, it is probable that Parks possessed accurate knowledge of Embury's residence. The historical sketch in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1791, conveys the information that in the same year that

Embury opened his ministry in his domicile "Thomas Webb preached in a hired room near the barracks." This statement is corroborated by the earliest extant account of the origin of the movement in New York, which is in a letter written therefrom to Mr. Wesley by T. T. (Thomas Taylor), April 11, 1768. Taylor therein says that Embury "spoke at first only in his own house;" but afterward an empty room was rented in the "neighborhood, which was the most infamous street in the city, adjoining the barracks." *

The polluted moral atmosphere of the locality in which

* The writer of this letter, which is signed T. T., is identified thus: Speaking of the purchase of the ground for the Wesleyan chapel in New York, he says: "There are eight of us who are joint purchasers, among whom Mr. Lupton and Mr. Webb are men of property." The original deed of conveyance of this ground, which is in the custody of the Eighteenth Street Methodist Episcopal Church, New York, bears the date of March 30, 1768. It contains the names of the purchasers, and their number is exactly the same as given in the letter by T. T. The names in the instrument of conveyance are these, namely: "Philip Embury, William Lupton, Charles White, Richard Sause, Henry Newton, Paul Heck, and Thomas Taylor [T. T.], all of the city of New York, and Thomas Webb, of Queens County." That the writer of the letter was Thomas Taylor seems to be clear. Taylor is fairly accurate no doubt in his account of the origin of Methodism in New York, but I cannot accept his authority absolutely as to the time. For example, the statement occurs in his letter that Whitefield's "last journey" to New York was "about fourteen years since;" whereas Whitefield was in New York in December, 1763, and possibly in the beginning of 1764; that is to say, a little more than *four* years before Taylor wrote. This letter was written five and a half months after Taylor came to New York from England; and while, as a new emigrant, he was acquainted in a general way with the facts relating to Embury's work it is not improbable that he was without exact knowledge of the dates. When, therefore, he states that Embury was roused up "eighteen months ago," he no doubt gave the time as he understood it, but probably not with accuracy. Asbury, in the Discipline of 1791, says that "Thomas Webb preached in a hired room near the Barracks, in 1766." Taylor, writing April 11, 1768, says that Webb found the New York Methodists out "about fourteen months ago," which fixes the time at "about" the middle of February, 1767. Taylor's use of the word "about" shows, however, that he did not profess exactness as to the time. As I have already shown, I regard Jesse Lee, the author of the first extended History of the Methodists in America, as better entitled to acceptance than any other Methodist historian and writer, especially where dates are involved. The letter of T. T. (Taylor), which was made public in an appendix to Atmore's Methodist Memorial in 1804, is valuable for the light it throws upon an obscure period of the Wesleyan movement in this country, but its author, concerning whom nothing is known except what he states in his letter, and who was but a stranger in New York when he wrote, and probably much occupied with his private concerns, perhaps was not exactly informed in every instance respecting the dates with which he connected events. We know nothing of Taylor's accuracy as a historical writer, only as we may judge from his epistle.

the New York Methodists assembled after they went out from Embury's house is shown by a recent authority, the late Mr. Henry B. Dawson, who, in an article in the *New York Christian Advocate*, April 16, 1885, says: "In April, 1776, a record was made of the retailers of spirituous liquors in the city of New York, a copy of which is before me, and I find that on Barracks Street there were three; at the 'back of the barracks' [which extended along a line parallel with the Chambers Street of our day, but south of it], there was one unlicensed retailer; while at the 'corner of Barracks,' there was one who was licensed; 'near the Barracks' there were three that were licensed; and near the Barracks gate there were three others, one of them unlicensed. It will be seen, therefore, that the neighborhood of the Barracks was well contaminated with the elements of vice. But Barracks Street, on which there was some pretension to respectability, presented only three of the eleven which were thus officially noticed." If in 1776 this first field of American Wesleyanism was so base, it is quite possible that it was even worse when Embury first unfurled the Methodist banner there.

Thus, among drinking-houses, in near proximity to a military barracks, in a very precinct of sin which was designated as "infamous," the first band of American Methodists set up their banners. Jesse Lee asserts, in his *History*, that "but few thought it worth their while to assemble with them in so contemptible a place," and Ezekiel Cooper says, "they were a poor and persecuted people, and had but few friends." *

In his account of this stage of the work, Peter Parks does not mention the "hired room," but speaks only of Embury's house as the meeting-place of the Wesleyans before their removal to the rigging-loft. We are ignorant, therefore, concerning how much of the good work which Parks artlessly describes was achieved in Embury's dwelling, and how much in the hired room adjoining the Barracks.

The movement now advanced rapidly. "There was a great excitement among the people," says Parks. "Many

* Cooper on Asbury, p. 73.

were awakened and some converted. Among those that were converted was my grandmother, Catherine Taylor, and my mother, Mary Parks. At this time Mr. Embury formed a class of all the members then in the society, who were twelve. There were three musicians belonging to the Sixteenth Regiment of the British troops, then stationed in the barracks in Barracks Street. Their names were James Hodge, Addison Low, and John Buckley. They were exhorters, and assisted Mr. Embury in the meetings. There were some souls awakened and converted in the poor-house. Mrs. Devericks [Devereux?] was one. Through her instrumentality Mr. Embury was called to preach in the poor-house. By this means the master of the poor-house, Billy Littlewood, was awakened and converted."

Thus we see that the first Methodists of America plunged into the purlieus of vice, and also bore their glorious message to the outcasts of poverty. Close by the barracks, amid scenes that were "infamous," the gospel as proclaimed by the mechanic Embury had "free course," and in the almshouse the superintendent, Billy Littlewood, became its trophy. He was a useful convert. In October, 1773, Joseph Pilmoor, in Philadelphia, wrote in his diary: "Tuesday I was to have gone to Chester, but had so much writing to do I was glad to send Billy Littlewood, who, though no preacher, is a good man, and will, I hope, be a blessing to the people."

And now a military hero appears among the lowly Wesleyans of New York. Lieutenant, otherwise called Captain, Webb, is a name famed in two hemispheres for his achievements as "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." In the historical account of the Rise of Methodism in New York, which was published in the Methodist Episcopal Discipline in 1791, it is said that "Webb preached in a hired room near the barracks," in 1766. Nathan Bangs, in his John Street dedication sermon, described the beginning of the work in Embury's domicile, and its advance to a hired room, the expense of which was paid by voluntary contributions. "About this time," says Bangs, in that discourse, "this small society received an increase of strength by the gospel labors of Cap-

tain Webb, of the British army. Appearing before the congregation in his military dress, the novelty of his appearance and the pathos and vehemence with which he preached, so attracted the attention of the people that the room in which they assembled was soon found insufficient to contain those who wished to hear. Accordingly they rented a rigging-loft in William Street. Here they assembled for some time, while Mr. Embury continued to preach with much success. Captain Webb did not confine his gospel labors to New York, but he visited Long Island and Philadelphia, in which places he preached successfully. Through his occasional visits and the unremitted and conscientious exertions of Mr. Embury in New York, the society flourished and increased in numbers. Persevering in their efforts to promote the present and future welfare of their fellow-men, this place also became insufficient to contain the people that assembled. They therefore began to think seriously of erecting a house of worship."

Bangs further stated in this sermon that a subscription paper was issued, and that they applied "to the mayor of the city and to opulent citizens, explained to them their design, and from them they received liberal donations. Captain Webb also lent his influence to encourage them. Thus aided, they finally succeeded in erecting a house for God's worship, which occupied the place where this in which we are assembled stands."

In the same discourse Bangs says the demolition of the first John Street Church began on May 13, 1817, and, on the 22d of the same month, "the foundation sermon was preached" for the second edifice on that spot.

Captain Webb's ministry, in the initial period of the movement in New York, was notable. "It was usual at that time," says an early writer, "for military men to wear on all occasions their regimental suit. To behold in the pulpit a preacher arrayed in a scarlet coat with splendid facings, having a sword, with the Bible before him, was one of those anomalies which the world, while it ridicules the person, cannot help admiring the boldness of the act. Captain Webb, by exciting curiosity, obtained hearers, many of whom, con-

vinced by his eloquence, under the influence of divine grace, attached themselves to the society. Some of the first members still living remember well his animated manner, and speak in terms of high approbation of his blunt and emphatic style. 'You must repent or be forever damned,' often resounded in the ears of the wicked, as his arm, fitted for wielding the sword, fell with violence upon the desk." *

It is said Captain Webb lost an eye in a military engagement. "His figure was portly, his countenance commanding, and he usually wore across his forehead a black ribbon with a blind attached, to cover his wounded eye."

Not only did Webb attract by the novelty of his soldierly aspect and bearing, but his doctrines were new, as the manner of their proclamation was vivid and forcible. He declared "point blank to the people," says Taylor to Wesley, "that all their knowledge and religion were not worth a rush unless their sins were forgiven and they had the witness of God's Spirit with theirs that they were the children of God. This strange doctrine, with some peculiarities in his person, obliged the society to look out for a larger place to preach in. They soon found a rigging-house, sixty feet in length and eighteen in breadth."

This new centre of New York Methodism was in Cart and Horse Street, now William, near John Street. "They erected a desk and benches," says Peter Park, "and there held preaching on the Sabbath morning at six o'clock, and in the evening, and sometimes in week evenings. They all went to the English Episcopal Church on the Sabbath day at the regular hours and communed there. At this time Charles White and Richard Sause came over.† They joined the little society, and were very useful to them. Henry Newton also joined the Methodists, and was very useful at this time."

* A Short Historical Account of the Early Society of Methodists established in the City of New York in the Year 1763. New York, 1824. This document dates the origin of the movement in New York three years earlier than the true date. It is anonymous.

† Parks and Taylor disagree concerning the land whence White and Sause came. Taylor, in 1768, wrote Wesley that they came from Dublin; Parks asserts they came from England. Wakeley in *Lost Chapters* says both were from Dublin.

Captain Webb's residence was near Jamaica, Long Island, among Mrs. Webb's relatives. Embury wrought as a mechanic, but he also labored "in Word and Doctrine." By his preaching and his other services he nourished the young society. Webb it is said preached occasionally on the heights of Brooklyn. He also began to preach in his house and elsewhere on Long Island, where his appeals were successful. "Within six months," says Taylor to Wesley, "about twenty-four persons received justifying grace, nearly half of them whites, the rest negroes. While Mr. Webb was—to borrow his own phrase—'felling trees on Long Island,' brother Embury was exhorting all who attended on Thursday evenings and Sundays, morning and evening, at the rigging-house, to flee from the wrath to come. His hearers began to increase, and some gave heed to his report, about the time the gracious Providence of God brought me safe to New York after a very favorable passage of six weeks from Plymouth. It was the twenty-sixth day of October [1767] when I arrived, recommended to a person for lodging. I inquired of my host, who was a very religious man, if any Methodists were in New York. He answered that there was one Captain Webb, a very strange sort of man, who lived on Long Island, and who sometimes preached at one Embury's at the rigging-house. In a few days I found out Embury. I soon found of what spirit he was, and that he was personally acquainted with you and your doctrines, and that he had been a helper in Ireland. He had formed two classes, one of the men and the other of the women, but had never met the society apart from the congregation, although there were six or seven men and as many women who had a clear sense of their acceptance in the Beloved.

"Mr. Embury lately has been more zealous than formerly; the consequence of which is that he is more lively in preaching, and his gifts as well as graces are much increased. Great numbers of serious persons come to hear God's word as for their lives. Their numbers increased so fast that our house, for six weeks past, would not contain half the people."

Thus through the eyes of a personal witness we see the

zealous work and the signal success of the primitive Wesleyans of New York. The notable progress of the movement, as reported to Mr. Wesley in the spring of 1768 by Taylor, seems to have entered into the Methodist traditions in New York; for the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper appended to the manuscript of Peter Parks's "True Statement" these statements, to wit: "The rigging-loft became too small to contain the crowded congregation which attended, which led them to a consultation and an arrangement to provide a larger place. A subscription was opened for the purpose of building a preaching-house, and they met with such encouragement from sundry liberal subscribers that they bought a few adjoining lots on John Street on which they proceeded to build the first Methodist preaching-house in America, where the present John Street Church now stands."

In the consultations which were held by the society concerning what provision should be made for the people that thronged within and about the "rigging-loft," Embury proposed renting a site for twenty-one years and erecting thereon a wooden tabernacle. An agreement was made for a lot, and a lease thereof was about to be executed when recourse was had to fasting and prayer for "two several days" that Divine direction might be obtained and that the proposed advance might be attended with the blessing of God. Then occurred an unexpected event. A Christian young man, who was not a member of the society, but a constant worshipper in the rigging-loft, offered to contribute ten pounds toward buying a site for a chapel. He waited upon a lady who owned two lots and got the terms on which she would sell them. The price—six hundred pounds—would on approved security be permitted to rest as a debt thereon. On the ground was a house which rented for eighteen pounds a year. Again they sought guidance through prayer. Then a decision was reached to buy the premises. The house became the parsonage which appears in the pictures of the original church edifice. It "was a building in the antique taste of the Dutch." Dr. Stevens erred in the statement in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church"

that "a parsonage adjacent to the chapel was built in 1770." Eight men, as we have seen, became the joint purchasers of the property. The locality was known as Golden Hill, "a rising ground near the borders of the city, now named John Street." A new conveyance was made, as we shall hereafter see, in 1770, by which the eight men ceased to hold the property and it was placed in fee-simple in the possession of the Methodists.

The movement of the young society to build a house of worship was the occasion of an outbreak of opposition. "Before we began to talk of building," wrote Taylor to Wesley, "the devil and his children were very peaceable; but since, many have cursed us in the name of the Lord, and labored to stop congregations from assisting us. But He that sitteth in the heavens laughed them to scorn. Many have broken through and given their friendly assistance. We have collected above one hundred pounds more than our own contributions and have reason to hope on the whole we shall have two hundred pounds."

The earnest Methodists of New York, after prayer for the Divine guidance and blessing, humbly but boldly advanced in their arduous enterprise of building a temple for God. "Providence favored Methodism too much to allow of its failure. The situation of the inhabitants of New York in religious matters was somewhat peculiar. A professed infidel dare not show himself. Open Atheism was known as a monster of European production. The Catholics whom fortune had cast upon these shores were obliged to hide their rites under a mask of thorough concealment. Nearly everybody belonged to some sect, and indifference was viewed with utter dislike. Even the troops that paraded on a Sunday morning, in marching down Broadway, filed off to the right or left, some to one church and some to another. All were religious, or pretended to be so; while the laws, taking an immediate interest in affairs of conscience, required the strictest attention to the established forms of worship.

"In what light then must the Methodists have been regarded, who, boldly throwing aside the shackles of prejudice

and hereditary customs, pursued a direct path to Heaven, and defied the most despotic of all laws, that which attempts to bind men's consciences? They were ridiculed and hated, but despised they could not be; for mankind, where they fear the reproofs which an amiable character can cast upon their follies, are never capable of real disdain how much soever they may feign it. Dreading the influence of their incontrovertible doctrines it required all the art of parents to keep their unprejudiced children from what they deemed a spiritual contagion. An old member of the church relates to this day the desire he entertained in his youth of finding a truly religious people, tells the difficulty he met with in escaping the threats of his family; of his resorting secretly up the winding stairs where Embury used to preach, and his listening there with great delight to all the truths of the Gospel.

"Messrs. Lupton, Sause, Newton, White, Jarvis, and a few more, were the persons most engaged in erecting the first Methodist Church in America. Of these, William Lupton, a very respectable merchant, proved himself the chief agent and support, whose maxim, it is said, was, 'The church first, and then my family.' They purchased materials and contracted for the building in their own names and upon their individual securities. The dimensions were forty-two feet wide by sixty feet long. The fire of opposition raged tremendously against the rising edifice. Its enemies loudly predicted its downfall. Pamphlets were published and discourses delivered in order to frustrate its completion."*

In this time of its exigence the struggling society was fortunate in having a member who held an influential position in the city as a citizen, a merchant, and a man of property, namely, William Lupton. He united his fortunes with it early. Joseph Pilmoor says the original American Methodists "after some time were joined by William Lupton, a gentleman of considerable property in New York, and not long after by Mr. Thomas Webb, who became a preacher among them." Now, according to the historical sketch in

* A Short Historical Account of the Early Methodist Society in New York.

the Methodist Episcopal Discipline, Webb came in the year of the society's origin. Therefore if Lupton was in it before him he must have joined it in the early months of its existence.

Mr. Lupton was zealously devoted to the movement. His presence, piety, and means gave confidence to its adherents and emboldened them to undertake the erection of a chapel. As we have seen, he was one of eight members who jointly bought the site, and, except Webb, he was the only man whose financial position gave to the project a warrant of success. Without him it may be doubted whether it would then have been accomplished. The New York Methodists, rich in faith but poor in purse, leaned on Lupton and Webb in their arduous work of erecting a sacred edifice, whereby the Wesleyan cause was established permanently in New York. The courage which their devotion and liberality gave to their brethren at this critical juncture is illustrated by Thomas Taylor in his letter of 1768, to Mr. Wesley, in which he declares they had reason to hope "in the whole we shall have two hundred pounds; but the house will cost us four hundred pounds more, so that unless God is pleased to raise up friends we shall yet be at a loss. I believe Mr. Webb and Mr. Lupton will borrow or advance two hundred pounds rather than the building should not go forward."

The subscription for the erection of the John Street Chapel, a copy of which still exists in "the Old Book," shows that Captain Thomas Webb put his signature at its top and appended thereto the sum of thirty pounds. The next name on the subscription is that of William Lupton, which stands for twenty pounds. A second time the same name appears in the document with an additional contribution of ten pounds, which makes Lupton's total subscription equal to that of Webb's, namely, thirty pounds. Dr. Stevens incorrectly says Webb's contribution was the largest sum by one-third given by any one person.* He must have failed to note that Lupton's name occurs twice in the list of contributors. Dr. Wakeley, in "Lost Chapters," states what "the Old

* Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, vol. i., p. 63.

Book " attests, that Mr. Lupton " not only gave his money and time, but he also lent the infant church in 1768 one hundred and ninety pounds."

The humble Methodists who began their great work of rearing a Wesleyan temple in New York with fasting and prayer, were sustained amid discouraging hindrances and hostile demonstrations by the assurance with which at Jerusalem Nehemiah emboldened his workmen : " Our God will fight for us." The hearts of many were turned kindly and generously toward their sacred project. Many citizens, including several clergymen of the Church of England, members of the medical and legal professions, and gentlemen of station and wealth, contributed to the funds for the edifice. Yet the work was difficult. Thomas Bell, a mechanic, who worked on the building, wrote, May 13, 1769, that " they were soon put to it in building their house. They made several collections about the town for it, and they went to Philadelphia and got part of the money there."

This first material fortification of Methodism in America was monumental of a splendid victory over adverse conditions and forces, won by a feeble band who counted all things but loss for Christ. The report of their victory spread afar. The parent Methodism heard it and was glad. The eyes of Wesley were attracted to the new fortress of the advancing and triumphing cause of which he was the human leader ; and prayers in its behalf and thanksgivings ascended from the English Conference to the skies. The effects of that achievement are visible all about this great land and have reached to other lands and continents.

The new chapel which, amid prayer, toil, self-denial, and faith, had risen, was for some years unfinished. " The gallery had no breastwork nor any stairs to ascend it ; boys would mount by a ladder and sit upon the platform. The lower part for a long time had only benches without even a back. So homely was the place where the Almighty deigned to show forth his power." *

A law of the colony did not permit dissenters to worship

* Young's History of Methodism, p. 239.

in a church. To elude this obstacle the Methodists built a fireplace in their new chapel, which gave it the rank of a dwelling. "The walls were constructed of ballast stone and the face was covered with a light-blue plaster. It was completed in the most substantial manner. Wesley's Chapel, as they called it, bore, upon the whole, an appearance as plain and simple as the lives of its projectors."

The edifice was formally opened on the thirtieth day of October, 1768. It is said that the pulpit from which Philip Embury preached on that occasion was made by himself, who, like the Founder of Christianity, was a carpenter.*

* It is a notable fact that Embury, the founder of Methodism in the North, and Strawbridge, its founder in the South, were both, according to published researches, house-builders.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE OPENING OF WESLEY'S CHAPEL IN NEW YORK TO THE APPOINTMENT OF PILMOOR AND BOARDMAN.

THERE is no evidence which invalidates the tradition that Wesley's Chapel in New York was the first Methodist Chapel in America. In the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, July, 1856, the Rev. Dr. William Hamilton says the first church of the American Methodists was in Maryland. Of this, however, he offers no proof. Lednum, in his "History of the Rise of Methodism in America," asserts the same, but fails to support the assertion by evidence. Bishop McTyeire also favors the same claim in his "History of Methodism."

If it were a fact, and known, that the first Methodist society in Maryland was anterior to Embury's society at the mouth of the Hudson, nothing would be settled thereby concerning which first reared a church edifice. That is a separate question altogether.

The oldest document which casts any light upon it is the Journal of the Rev. Joseph Pilmoor. He was in Maryland in June, 1772, and on the sixth day thereof he went to the home of Richard Dallam, which he describes as "most beautifully situated on a branch of the Chesapeake."

The Chesapeake Bay at its nearest point to Pipe Creek is a considerable distance from it; and it is said by Lee and others that the first chapel built in Strawbridge's field was near Pipe Creek, but in reality, as we shall soon see, it was close to Sam's Creek. It is doubtful whether there is now a possibility of determining the true site of that primitive edifice. It was early taken down or removed, and was appropriated to the uses of a barn. With the exception of that contained in a short manuscript found among the papers of the late Dr.

Robert Emory, I have not discovered any description of the house written by anyone, since Asbury, who had seen it where it originally stood. Its size was twenty by twenty feet.

The home of Dallam, to which Pilmoor went on Saturday, June 6, 1772, in company with Robert Williams, was, however, not located upon the Chesapeake, but "*upon a branch of the Chesapeake.*" Therefore it may have been nearer to "the Log Meeting-House," by several miles than was any point directly upon the bay. At any rate, Pilmoor passed the Saturday night at Richard Dallam's, and the next day he went to "a new chapel," which evidently was a considerable distance from the house where he slept, for he wrote: "Sunday, June 7.—Rose early in the morning finely refreshed with balmy sleep and happy in the favor of God. After breakfast we set off for the new chapel, which a number of planters have lately built for the Methodists, where we found a large congregation waiting for us." Two or three things should here be noticed: First, Pilmoor, on this particular morning, rose early. Wesley's preachers are understood to have been early risers; and certainly Pilmoor was such, for he was accustomed frequently to preach at five o'clock in the morning, as we shall soon see; but his having in this instance mentioned the fact of his early awakening indicates that it was especially early, or, why should he have noted it? Second, "After breakfast" he "set off." It is inferred that it was an early breakfast, as he rose so early. Third, The congregation was waiting for him. The time of his arrival is not indicated and we do not know at what hour of the day it was the custom then to begin Methodist meetings in Maryland, but a little later, in the Southern country, the Methodists began their worship at noon. In November, 1784, Dr. Coke wrote in the portion of his *Journal* which was published in the *Philadelphia Arminian Magazine*, that the Methodists observed as the "general time of preaching throughout the whole continent, except the large towns, the middle of the day, even upon week-days." If the appointed hour of the service was at or approximate to noon, and the audience had gathered before Pilmoor's arrival, it clearly follows that he rode many

miles before he came to the chapel. Apparently a Methodist preacher, upon a good horse, might have reached the famous "Log Meeting-House" at Sam's Creek, and preached there on the first Sunday in June, 1772, notwithstanding he slept the preceding night at Richard Dallam's home "on a branch of the Chesapeake."

Moreover, Pilmoor says this chapel was "new" and also that it was but "lately built." John Street Chapel in New York had then been occupied by the society three years and seven months.

At the time Pilmoor preached at the "new chapel," there does not appear to have been more than one Methodist preaching-house in Maryland. Three weeks subsequently he was at a "new chapel" in the same province, but it seems likely it was the one to which he went from Mr. Dallam's house on June 7th. This second time he appears to have gone from the region of Deer Creek, and this time also he started "early." Under the date of June 28, 1772, he writes: "We set off early in the morning for a new chapel, where we found four times as many people as it would contain." This early start indicates that he travelled a good many miles before he came to his destination. I think the inference is fair that the "new chapel" which he visited June 7th, was identical with the one for which he set out "early in the morning" of June 28th, exactly three weeks later. If the chapel to which he went on both occasions was the same, then it is the only one mentioned by him as then standing in Maryland. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that it was the first Methodist house of worship which was built in the province. If so, it was then "new" and "lately built;" and therefore was of later construction than Wesley's Chapel in New York. Should it, however, be claimed that the chapel where Pilmoor preached on June 28, 1772, was not the chapel to which he went from Richard Dallam's on the 7th of the same month, no point would be made for the antecedence of the Maryland sanctuary; for if at the first visit of Pilmoor to Maryland there were two chapels within its borders then both were "*new*."

Above two years prior to this time he first saw the preaching-house in New York, yet in his Journal he did not designate it as "new," though it was opened for worship by Embury less than seventeen months before Pilmoor first looked upon it. But the chapel in Maryland, to which he went June 7, 1772, was, he says, "the *new* chapel which a number of planters have lately built for the Methodists." The one to which he went on the 28th of the same month was also, he asserts "a *new* chapel." If, as I suppose, they were the same, he at each visit described it as "new." If they were not the same then *both* were "*new*," and as Pilmoor mentions no other Methodist house of worship in Maryland, it is but just to assume that the "new" chapel or chapels then there did not precede the edifice in John Street, New York, which was well advanced in its fourth year.

Six months, lacking one day, after Pilmoor's first visit to the "new chapel" Asbury was at a "preaching-house" in Maryland. Pilmoor was there in warm, Asbury in cold, weather, but the place in each instance probably was the same. Asbury mentions no other "preaching-house" in Maryland at that time. Of this one in his Journal on Lord's day, December 6, 1772, he says: "Went about five miles to preach in our first preaching-house. The house had no windows or doors; the weather was very cold, so that my heart pitied the people when I saw them so exposed. Putting a handkerchief over my head I preached, and after an hour's intermission—the people waiting all the time in the cold—I preached again."

This chapel Asbury described as "our first preaching-house." There is no warrant for assuming that by this phrase he meant that it was the first "preaching-house" in America. Rather, as he was then in Maryland, probably his design was to speak of it as the first Methodist house of worship which was built in that province. Should it be said the phrase "our first preaching-house" implied a second house, it may be replied that in the half year which had passed since Pilmoor first visited the new chapel another edifice might, possibly, have been raised.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Emory, who was president of Dick-

inson College and the author of a "History of the Discipline," also was an explorer of data relating to the rise and progress of Methodism in Maryland. He was familiar with the locality and its people. He collected valuable documents relating to the early history of the Wesleyan movement in that State. He had gathered much material for the Life of Bishop Asbury, which he began but did not complete. One of the manuscript documents which he left among his papers was a description of the Log Meeting-House, apparently furnished by one who well remembered it. Dr. Emory gave his attestation to the authenticity of this account of the first Methodist house of worship in Maryland by incorporating its facts into his unfinished "Life of Asbury." I will now reproduce the account from the original manuscript, still extant : "The old log-building occupied by Mr. Strawbridge as a preaching-house stood at the head of a small drain that runs into Sam's Creek in about the distance of half a mile. It is said in Wesley's Life, Pipe Creek, but it is Sam's Creek. It was built of hewed logs, the whole raised and covered. Sleepers were put in, which were the only seats belonging to it. The doors and windows were cut out and faced, but there was no pulpit. There a society was raised. The first members there, as far as I know, were John Evans, Andrew Poulson, Benjamin Marcarel, and John England." Signed "L. B." or "Z. B."

The writer of this description perhaps was Mrs. Bennett, a daughter of "John Evans, one of Strawbridge's first converts," who was yet living when, in 1856, Dr. Hamilton published his article on Early Methodism in Maryland, and she had then attained to the great age of eighty-eight.

The above description accords with the statement made by Asbury, namely, that "our first preaching-house" in Maryland, where he delivered two sermons in the cold of December, 1772, "had no windows or doors."

Dr. Emory says in a manuscript he left that the old Log Meeting-House "was certainly not built later than 1772, and probably not before."

There was a circumstance mentioned by Asbury, and two

similar ones which Pilmoor noted when he was at the "new chapel," namely, that after an hour's intermission, the people meanwhile remaining, a second sermon was preached. Pilmoor shall describe both the occasions of his ministry at the new chapel in the month of June, 1772.

On June 7th he says: "Rose early in the morning finely refreshed with balmy sleep and happy in the favor of God. After breakfast we set off for the new chapel, which a number of planters have lately built for the Methodists, where we found a fine congregation waiting for us. I retired in the woods a few moments for secret prayer and then our worship began. *After the first service was over we waited about an hour and then began again.* Mr. Williams preached and the people were deeply affected." At his next visit to what I assume was the same chapel, and which was three weeks later, namely, June 28, 1772, Pilmoor says: "We set off early in the morning for a new chapel, where we found four times as many people as it would contain. So they made me a place in the wood, and I stood beneath the spreading branches of a stately oak, and called the multitude to the gospel Bethesda—the Spiritual House of Mercy, where all that come may obtain a perfect cure of all their diseases. *After preaching was over the people were unwilling to go away, so I told them if they would wait till I had got a little refreshment I would give them another discourse:* so I stepped to a cottage at a small distance and got a dish of tea, and then returned to the wood, where I found most of the people waiting. *I preached again,* and was particularly owned and blessed of God." Now the fact of the people waiting until they heard a second sermon on both the occasions when Pilmoor preached at "the new chapel" in the summer of 1772, and the further circumstance of their staying in the cold at "our first preaching-house" when Asbury was there in the following winter until, after the lapse of an hour, he preached to them again, apparently support the presumption that all those events occurred at the same place, which could hardly have been any other than "the Log Meeting-House." We conclude that as it was then but "lately built,"

it did not precede the erection of the John Street Chapel in the city of New York.

This conclusion accords with the earliest traditions. Jesse Lee, the careful historian, who preached in Maryland in 1787, says: "The first Methodist meeting-house that was built in the United States was that in New York." * Ezekiel Cooper, who was reared in Maryland, and who began his ministry there in 1784; who preached much within its borders in the early times; who was personally acquainted with many of the primitive preachers who travelled there, and who was stationed in New York City twenty-six years after the John Street Church was built; recorded, as we have seen, with his own hand, upon the manuscript of Peter Parks's "True Statement" the declaration that the New York Methodists "proceeded to build the first Methodist preaching-house in America where the present John Street Church now stands." In his work on Asbury, Cooper says the New York "society increased in numbers, in friends, and in strength, so that in the year 1768 they began to build the first Methodist chapel in America."

Dr. Coke came hither several times and labored extensively in this country prior to 1792, when he and Mr. Moore published their "Life of Wesley." Therein it is declared (page 449) that the "chapel in New York was the first chapel in Mr. Wesley's connection in America."

The Rev. Henry Smith was a native of Frederick County, Md., and familiar with the locality of Strawbridge's labors and with people who well knew him. Smith was licensed to preach in Frederick circuit in 1793. In his "Recollections and Reflections of an Old Itinerant" (p. 205), he says: "In the summer of 1820 I rode some miles in company with Bishop McKendree to see the place where a meeting-house had been built for Mr. Strawbridge. Some of the logs were still there and sound. This was the first meeting-house in Maryland and the second in America." Thus it is established by primitive testimony that John Street Chapel was antecedent to the Log Meeting-House.

* History of the Methodists, p. 25.

The assumption that the new chapel to which Pilmoor went in June, 1772, was the Log Meeting-House of Strawbridge has received possible corroboration in an article on "Methodist Shrines in Maryland," by the Rev. Lucien Clark, D.D., published in the *New York Christian Advocate*, September 6, 1894. Dr. Clark, in speaking of his recent visit to the Strawbridge neighborhood, says: "A majestic oak under which Mr. Strawbridge frequently preached is pointed out. It sends out its vigorous branches in every direction, affording an ample shade under which two hundred persons might assemble." Pilmoor says there were "four times as many people" on June 28, 1772, at the new chapel "as it would contain. So they made me a place in the wood, and I stood beneath the spreading branches of a stately oak, and called the people to the gospel Bethesda."

After the dedication of the preaching-house in New York by Embury, October 30, 1768, he continued to preach and otherwise to serve the society until the first English preachers, regularly sent hither by Mr. Wesley, arrived. We get but few glimpses of the work there from the date of the opening of the chapel until Pilmoor began his first term of service in the latter end of March, 1770.

Captain Webb was a bold and aggressive soldier of Christ. We have seen that soon after he joined Embury in New York City he began to preach on Long Island. Then we find him in Philadelphia, where he founded Methodism. He preached in a sail-loft "near the drawbridge which then spanned Dock Creek at Front Street on the Delaware River." *

The dates of Webb's first visits to Philadelphia are obscure. In a biographical sketch of Mr. John Hood, by the Rev. Dr. Thomas F. Sargeant, which was printed in the *New York Christian Advocate*, in March, 1829, it is said that in 1767 or 1768 Webb formed the first class in Philadelphia, of which Hood was a member. Thomas Bell, a Methodist mechanic, in a letter dated May 13, 1769, and published in the *London Arminian Magazine*, in 1807 (pages 45, 46), says the Methodists of New York obtained part of the

* Lednum : Rise of Methodism, p. 40.

money for their preaching-house in Philadelphia. Bell himself, as the subscription list shows, contributed to the building fund, and he also says he worked upon the structure six days. "The Old Book" also attests that contributions for the edifice were received from Philadelphia through Webb at a later date. If, in 1768, he obtained money in that city for the New York chapel, it is pretty clear there were Methodists in Philadelphia in that year, and probably earlier.

Dr. Wrangle, from Sweden, preached for some time in Philadelphia. In his memoir of Hood, Sargeant says that about the time Webb appeared there Wrangle was recalled by his government. On his return to Sweden he met Mr. Wesley in England. Wesley says he dined with Wrangle, October 14, 1768, and adds: "His heart seemed to be greatly united to the American Christians, and he strongly pleaded for our sending some of our preachers to help them." Four days later Wesley, in his Journal, says: "Dr. Wrangle preached in the new room to a crowded audience, and gave general satisfaction by the simplicity and life which accompanied his sound doctrine."

Sargeant says Hood applied to Dr. Wrangle for religious counsel, and was advised by him to make an associate of a young man named Lambert Wilmer, who was an attendant of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, in Philadelphia. Hood took Wrangle's advice, and the two young men formed a close friendship, which lasted throughout their lives. By the request of both they were interred in the same grave. Sargeant further says that Wrangle wrote to Hood, Wilmer, and other of his pious friends in Philadelphia, in high commendation of Mr. Wesley and his economy, and sent them some of Wesley's writings; and also advised them to join the Methodists, should a society be formed in Philadelphia.

According to these data, Dr. Wrangle seems not to have known of a Methodist society in Philadelphia when he removed therefrom; and, as he was with Wesley in England in the middle of October, 1768, Webb probably did not formally organize Methodism in Philadelphia prior to that year. Lednum dates its origin there in the year 1768.

Its beginning in Philadelphia, as in New York, was small. The first society was composed of only seven members. Among these were Hood and Wilmer. Both continued there in the fellowship of Methodism for over a half-century. They witnessed its early struggles and also its victorious progress over the land. When they joined the Methodists probably there were fewer than two hundred members in the American provinces. When Hood was laid with Wilmer in their common grave, the Wesleyan movement had become a powerful evangelical force, whose ecclesiastical lines extended to the frontiers of the republic, and embraced nearly a half-million of communicants.

Wilmer and Hood were worthy representatives of the cause to which they gave their youthful ardor and their mature strength. Hood, especially, was a notable character. Of most amiable temper and truly devout, he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of the young society in Philadelphia to such a degree that, in 1770, at the age of twenty-one years, he was appointed Class Leader. For nearly threescore years he continued in that useful office. James Emerson was the first leader of the Philadelphia society. Hood was licensed to preach by the Rev. Caleb B. Pedicord, in 1783, and was an acceptable and useful local preacher. The celebrated Dr. Rush, according to Sargeant, once told the latter "he heard Hood preach on 'Quench not the Spirit,' and thought it a much better discourse than many he had heard from college-bred ministers; that he appeared to understand well the figure used by the apostle, and illustrated and enforced it with fine effect." He preached abroad in the region of Philadelphia, and was successful in originating a number of societies.

Hood had a good voice, and was a leader of song in the sanctuary. He sang with the spirit and understanding, and his face glowed with joy as he bore the people with him in melodious worship. His end was triumphant. He rejoiced in his Redeemer. "Oh, He is my life and my all," he exclaimed. "I feel Him in my heart." He said: "How I long to be with Him. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The last word caught from the lips of this primitive Methodist as he expired was "Heaven!" He departed February 24, 1829, in his eightieth year.

From the formation of the society until the arrival of Pilmoor and Boardman, in the fall of 1769, we are without information as to the labors of Webb in Philadelphia. In a letter he there wrote to Mr. Wesley, October 31, 1769, Pilmoor says: "We were not a little surprised to find Captain Webb in town, and a society of about a hundred members, who desire to be in close connection with you." This indicates that after planting the Wesleyan vine in "the City of Brotherly Love," Webb did not cease carefully and efficiently to nourish it.

Of the work of Strawbridge in Maryland at this period we get only a glimpse or two. Webb had extended his work into Delaware. He came thence to Pilmoor, in Philadelphia, in the fall of 1769, as a bearer of thrilling news. On November 4th of this year, Pilmoor says: "Captain Webb came on from Wilmington, where he had been for a few days on a visit, and brought us tidings that Jesus the Great Shepherd had blessed his labors in the gospel and made them successful in turning men from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God. The work of God begun by him and Mr. Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, soon spread through the greater part of Baltimore County, and several hundreds of people were brought to repentance and turned unto the Lord." A fair interpretation of this passage would warrant the conclusion that Captain Webb was at work with Strawbridge in Maryland at or near the beginning of the movement there. I have found no trace elsewhere of the presence of Webb in western Maryland at so remote a date. Yet Pilmoor's statement, apparently made on Webb's authority, indicates that the ardent itinerating soldier had found the Maryland pioneer and united with him in gospel labors. The fact that in the first month of 1770 Strawbridge preached in Philadelphia, is a corroborative circumstance.

According to Pilmoor there were converts in Maryland at least as early as 1768. In a reference to the appeal from

New York for laborers, which, as he states, was laid before the Wesleyan Conference at Bristol in that year, he mentions the work of Strawbridge. He says: "These"—that is, the Methodists in New York—"together with a few people in Maryland who had lately been awakened under the ministry of Robert Strawbridge, sent a pressing call to the British Conference in 1768, entreating us to send over some preachers to help them." If, as Pilmoor seems to say, Webb was associated with Strawbridge at the beginning of the Methodist movement in Maryland, which "soon spread through the greater part of Baltimore County," it is easy to account for the tidings thereof reaching Wesley in 1768. Webb probably personally knew Wesley, and it is known that he wrote to him concerning the work in America. In 1772 he stood before the British Conference pleading for preachers for this land.

Strawbridge, in this period of his career, sowed seed which produced a valuable harvest. Dr. Thomas E. Bond was widely and favorably known for a generation as a promoter of Methodism. For years, near to the middle of the nineteenth century, he wielded potential influence as the adroit and powerful editor of the *New York Christian Advocate*. Dr. Bond has borne grateful testimony to the results of Strawbridge's ministry in Maryland. In the *Journal* he edited, of the issue of July 10, 1844, he declared that his "parents were both among the first-fruits of Mr. Strawbridge's labors; a man to whom they and their posterity have been so much indebted as an instrument of God, of such substantial good to them." Richard Owen, the first native Methodist preacher of Maryland, and, next to Edward Evans, the first who came forth in the American ranks, though Watters was before him in the itinerancy, was also one of the early trophies of the ministry of Strawbridge. Various others, through his early labors here, were brought into the Wesleyan fold and became stanch adherents and efficient propagators of Christianity, as taught by Methodism. But it is impossible to trace his work chronologically, because of the obscurity in which it is enveloped.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARRIVAL OF ROBERT WILLIAMS AND HIS MINISTRY IN AMERICA IN 1769.

THE first Wesleyan evangelist who came to the assistance of the Methodists in this country was Robert Williams. The precise time of his coming is not known, but it was as early as September, 1769, at least. It is highly probable that he reached America sometime in the summer of that year. His arrival was an opportune event for the struggling Wesleyan cause.

Lee does not say at which American port Williams landed, but Stevens asserts that it was the port of New York. Thus he conflicts with Lee, who says that "as soon as Mr. Williams landed he went to New York." It is now clear that Stevens erred on this point.

Williams was a heroic preacher, and from the day of his arrival in a storm-bound ship at Norfolk, Virginia, he was a dauntless, tireless, and successful laborer in the American Wesleyan field. His character is finely indicated by what he did immediately after he landed.

Among the valuable documents found among the papers of the Rev. Dr. Robert Emory is a manuscript of considerable age which contains the account of Williams's first night in America. He related the story himself to Mr. Josias Dallam, an early Methodist of Maryland, whose son, Dr. William M. Dallam, wrote it out in a vivid style.

"The vessel in which he sailed to this country," says Dr. Dallam, "was bound to Baltimore, but the unfavorable weather obliged the crew to put into Norfolk. Mr. Williams was an entire stranger there. The letters he had brought with him were all addressed to persons in Philadelphia and Baltimore. Having had a long and boisterous passage, and been much

confined below, he left the vessel soon after its arrival at the wharf, and with his Bible and hymn-book in his pocket proceeded up the main street. It was the evening hour. He chanced to see a house shut up, and bearing on its door the familiar words, traced in chalk, 'This house to let.' He ascended its steps, took his hymn-book from his pocket and began to sing. This attracted the attention of the citizens, and many, as they passed and repassed, stopped to listen. After a considerable number had collected he knelt down and prayed for the prosperity of Norfolk, its citizens, and neighborhood. On rising from his knees he informed them whence he came, of his object in visiting America, and the circumstances which had placed him a stranger in their town; and asked if there was any person present who would be hospitable enough to give him a night's lodging. A lady came forward and offered to take him home with her in her carriage. She lived a short distance in the country. He accepted the invitation and accompanied her. She proved to be the wife of a respectable sea-captain who was then absent on a distant voyage. She entertained Mr. Williams very kindly, and when the hour for retiring to rest arrived he requested permission to have family prayer. The household assembled, and while he petitioned a throne of grace in their behalf, his hospitable entertainer was convicted and converted.

"He prayed also for the conversion of her husband. That same night, on the far-off ocean, the captain for whom he prayed was singularly affected. Having retired to his berth as usual, he found it impossible to sleep, and his restlessness and uneasiness so increased that he rose, walked the deck, and then again lay down. Sleep still forsook his eyelids, and the second time he rose, alarmed for the safety of his ship, and unable to account for his peculiar feelings. He called to the mate and inquired if all was right. He was answered in the affirmative. It was a calm night and he feared his vessel had run aground, but soon discovered that such apprehensions were unfounded. A third time he retired, but his uneasiness and distress continued to increase. At last he fell upon his

knees and began to pray most fervently. God vouchsafed an answer and converted his soul. The circumstance was so remarkable that he noted it in his log-book, and on comparing dates when he arrived at home, he discovered that it occurred on the very night when Mr. Williams had offered his petitions for him. My father afterward accidentally became acquainted with the captain, and heard from him the same account that Mr. Williams had given him."

Thus did this intrepid evangelist enter upon his arduous but glorious career in the New World.

A brief record in "the Old Book" of a payment "for a hat for Mr. Williams," on September 20, 1769, shows that he had then been in New York. A society ticket issued there, bearing the signature of Robert Williams, and dated October 1, 1769, is yet extant in the library of Drew Theological Seminary. His ministry in the city no doubt was an inspiration and a joy to the Wesleyans there, who were urgently calling to Mr. Wesley for preachers.

We are told by Jesse Lee that Williams "had been a local preacher in England and received a permit from Mr. Wesley to preach in America under the direction of the regular missionaries. Mr. Williams, however, was not sent over by Mr. Wesley. His coming to America was partly owing to temporal business, and withal, feeling a particular desire to preach the gospel in America, he had given his word to a Methodist man in Ireland that if he (Mr. Ashton) would come over to live in America he would accompany him across the Atlantic."* Lee further states that on his arrival Williams went to New York; also that he visited Pilmoor in Philadelphia, the first of November, 1769, and then went to Maryland.

The accuracy of Lee as a historian is herein illustrated. Pilmoor, in his Journal, at this time mentions Williams's visit to Philadelphia, and his statements show Lee to be in accord with the facts. Under date of November 1, 1769, Pilmoor writes: "Mr. Robert Williams called on me on his way from New York to Maryland. He came over to America about

* History of the Methodists, pp. 26-7.

business, and being a local preacher in England, Mr. Wesley gave him a license to preach occasionally under the direction of the regular preachers." As Williams was personally present with Pilmoor, and at this time preached several sermons in Philadelphia, we infer that Pilmoor derived these particulars directly from him. Crook, in his work on "Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism," says Williams was a travelling preacher at the time he came to America. Here then is a conflict of authorities. "The truth is," Crook says, "Williams was not a lay evangelist, but an accredited member of the Irish Conference. He was taken out to travel at the Conference of 1766, and his name will be found for that year among the appointments as follows: 'Northwest (about Derry), John Johnston, James Morgan; Northeast (about Belfast and Coleraine), James Rea, *Robert Williams*.' Under date of Friday, April 3, 1767, Wesley writes: 'At the end of Dromore I met Robert Williams, who showed me the way to Newry.' In 1767 he was stationed at Castlebar, amid the wilds of Connaught, with William Pennington. At the Conference of 1768 he stands again for Castlebar thus: 'Castlebar, W. Collins, R. W.' " *

Joseph Pilmoor knew Robert Williams well, and so also did Jesse Lee. We learn from the biography of Lee that "Williams was the first of the Wesleyan preachers who visited that part of Virginia where he resided. In the spring of the year 1774 Mr. Williams began to form societies in the neighborhood. It was then that Mr. Lee united himself to the society of the Methodists." † Lee himself in the preface to his History says that he became a member early in the spring of 1774. Thus it is clear that he had opportunities to gather facts concerning Williams's history. Ashton, with whom he crossed the Atlantic, was from Ireland, which indicates that Williams had been in that country. Besides he possibly had desisted from travelling a short time before he emigrated to America. "Mr. Williams was an Englishman, but not a travelling preacher *at that time*," says

* Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism, pp. 137-8.

† Thrift's Memoirs of Lee, pp. 11-12.

Lee. He, however, may have travelled before "*that time.*" Pilmoor says Williams was "a local preacher in England;" and also that Wesley "gave him a license to preach occasionally in America." Yet before this he may have been a travelling preacher, and returned to the local ranks. Thus the apparent conflict between Pilmoor and Lee on the one side; and Crook on the other, respecting Williams's ministerial status in Europe, might possibly be reconciled without invalidating the statements of either, if all the relevant facts could be brought into view.

Concerning Williams's emigration to this country, Jesse Lee, in his "History of the Methodists" (page 7), gives the following account: "Mr. Williams was an Englishman, but not a travelling preacher at that time. At length he heard that Mr. Ashton had embarked for America, and according to his promise he hurried down to the town near where the ship lay, sold his horse to pay his debts, and taking his saddle-bags on his arm set off for the ship with a loaf of bread and a bottle of milk, and no money to pay his passage. His good friend Ashton provided for him and they came over together. As soon as Mr. Williams landed he went to New York, where he preached in Wesley's chapel before either of the other itinerant preachers came to that city. Although Mr. Williams had come to this country of his own accord, the preachers and people encouraged him in his labors in spreading the gospel. On the first of November he visited Mr. Pilmoor in Philadelphia, and then went on to Maryland." He preached his last sermon for the time in Philadelphia, and set off for Maryland, November 6, 1769. Pilmoor says he then was very sincere and zealous.

We shall meet Mr. Williams frequently in the course of our narrative. We now approach an auspicious epoch in the progress of the young movement in America, the appointment by the Rev. John Wesley of two itinerant preachers of the English Conference to this most fruitful field of the great spiritual and moral reformation called Methodism.

SECOND PERIOD.

FROM THE APPOINTMENT OF WESLEY'S FIRST MISSIONARIES TO AMERICA TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST AMERICAN CONFERENCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE APPOINTMENT AND ARRIVAL OF BOARDMAN AND PILMOOR.

A RELIGIOUS movement which began in weakness and obscurity but rapidly advanced to imposing magnitude, affecting in its progress the spiritual destinies of millions, and promoting the moral, social, political, and intellectual welfare of the greatest republic of the world, is an attractive subject for studious contemplation.

The Wesleyan Reformation which stirred England in the eighteenth century, was destined to find a larger scope and to win its greatest triumphs in the western hemisphere. Borne across the ocean by an emigrant ship, it was planted by a mechanic, who also had been a schoolmaster, as a frail, diminutive tree on the American shore. It so flourished that its luxuriant branches soon cast a benignant shadow over the territory of the Federal Union. Its roots have pierced the shores of distant isles and continents; its trunk has grown lofty and massive, and it is now yielding its benign fruitage and its leaves of healing to heathen lands and to many nations.

We now approach a period when the Wesleyan movement is to command wider recognition and to have a larger opportunity in America. Of it and its founders here it might justly be said, according to St. Paul in the revised version: "God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak

things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world and the things that are despised did God choose, yea, and the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are that no flesh should glory before God."

While, in September, 1769, Robert Williams was ministering to the society in New York, the *Mary* and *Elizabeth*, under the command of Captain Sparks, was sweeping westward over the Atlantic bearing two Wesleyan evangelists hither. The report of the work on these shores under Embury, Strawbridge, and Webb quickly reached England. Samuel, son of Philip Embury, recorded the assertion that his father not only built the preaching-house in New York but that he also wrote to Mr. Wesley asking him to send preachers there. Coke and Moore, in their "*Life of Wesley*," issued in 1792, assert that Captain Webb wrote a letter to Mr. Wesley earnestly importuning him to send missionaries to America. Wesley could not resist these appeals. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor are now about to connect their names imperishably with the fortunes of the Wesleyan section of Christianity in the New World.

The condition and necessities of Methodism in New York were placed before Mr. Wesley by Thomas Taylor, in a letter written April 11, 1768. "I must," said Taylor, "importune your assistance not only in my own behalf, but also in the name of the whole society. We want an able and experienced preacher; one who has both gifts and grace necessary for the work. God has not, indeed, despised the day of small things. There is a real work of grace begun in many hearts by the preaching of Mr. Webb and Mr. Embury. But although they are both useful and their hearts are in the work, they want many qualifications for such an undertaking and the progress of the gospel here depends much upon the qualifications of the preachers. If possible we must have a man of wisdom, of sound faith, and a good disciplinarian — one whose heart and soul are in the work; and I doubt not, by the goodness of God, such a flame would soon be kindled as would never stop until it reached the great South Sea. Dear

sir, I entreat you, for the good of thousands, to use your utmost endeavors to send one over. With respect to money for the payment of the preacher's passage, if they could not procure it we would sell our coats and shirts to procure it for them. I most earnestly beg an interest in your prayers, and trust you and many of our brethren will not forget the church in this wilderness."

This letter was written above four months prior to the assembling of the Wesleyan Conference at Bristol, August 16, 1768. It is certain that the importunate appeal for help was heard by that body. Pilmoor, as we have seen, says the New York Wesleyans, "together with a few people in Maryland who had lately been awakened under the ministry of Robert Strawbridge, sent a pressing call to the British Conference in 1768, *entreating*" that some preachers should be sent to them. He further says: "This was laid before the brethren and left to their consideration until the next Conference."

None of the historians of the movement except Lockwood have referred to a disclosure to the British Conference in 1768 of the needs of the cause on this side of the ocean. They do not intimate that the appeal for laborers reached that body until 1769. Pilmoor, however, explicitly asserts that the "pressing call" of the New York and Maryland Methodists was heard by the Conference which sat in Bristol, August 16-19, 1768. Wesley did not then see his way clear to send any preachers to America. Rather, he was moved to exclaim, "O what can we do for more laborers? We can only cry to the Lord of the harvest." * Not only were the claims of the work at home urgent but it was not desirable that such a weighty movement should be undertaken without calm and prayerful forethought. Not having had their minds previously and specially turned to their beckoning transatlantic brethren, probably none of the preachers were ready to volunteer for the mission. The subject was left for them to ponder until the ensuing Conference.

We do not know what immediate effect was produced

* Myles' Chronological History of the People called Methodists, p. 115. London.

upon Richard Boardman by the pleading call for help which came from over the Atlantic to the Conference of 1768. Joseph Pilmoor, however, did not forget the Macedonian cry. He has left a vivid record of his mental exercises following upon the introduction to the Conference of the American call for help. His field of labor was in Wales, and "during that year," he says, "which I spent chiefly in Pembrokeshire, I was frequently under great exercise of mind respecting the dear Americans, and found a willingness to sacrifice everything for their sakes."

A fortnight after the adjournment of the Conference of 1768, at which his mind was turned toward this land, he, having fervent longings for full devotion to God, made a formal and written covenant of consecration. This covenant he signed less than a year before he embarked for Philadelphia. Probably it was one of the steps which brought him hither. It illustrates the spiritual condition of the man who was now looking toward a possible period of service in behalf of the young Methodism of America. It was made in Pembroke, South Wales, and is as follows: "Saturday, September 3, 1768. Being deeply affected with a sense of the goodness of God to my soul I was inclined to give myself up in a solemn covenant unto God, to be fully and forever His.

"First. I do this day give up and devote my soul to Thee, O my God, to be altogether and forever thine. I submit myself to Thy yoke and wait for Thy continual guidance in all things. Let all my thoughts be pure and holy. Let all my desires center in Thee, and all my affections be placed entirely upon thee. And in order to that do Thou, O my God, wean me from all my fondness for created enjoyments, and let me be entirely crucified unto the world and the world unto me.

"Secondly. I offer up my body to be forever Thine. Therefore, I pray that Thou wouldst keep me from all pollution and defilement, and keep me chaste and clean as a temple for Thee; that Thou mayst dwell forever in my heart and be glorified by my body and soul which are Thine. And at last raise me up from the dust of death to dwell among Thy saints in Glory.

“Thirdly. I hereby promise to spend all my time in Thy service and all my talents to Thy glory and honor.

“JOSEPH PILMOOR.”

To this covenant he appended the following statement :

“N. B.—The covenant mentioned above was of the utmost advantage to me and generally kept for many years. *Gratia Valabit.* Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, my wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification.” *

In this frame of sacred devotedness Pilmoor's inner ear was attent to the silent call of the Holy Spirit. Nerved by a new and signed dedication of his body, soul, time, and talents to the Lord, he was courageous to dare the hardships of a missionary service in a new and distant land. “I was happy enough as to my situation and connexions,” he says, “and met with the utmost encouragement from the people and from the preachers ; yet I could not be satisfied to continue in Europe. A sense of duty so affected my mind, and my heart was drawn out with such longing desires for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, that I was made perfectly willing to forsake my kindred and native land, with all that was most near and dear to me on earth, that I might spread abroad the honors of His glorious Name. But being afraid lest I should be mistaken and follow my own will and inclinations rather than the spirit and the call of God, I resolved to mention it to Mr. Wesley and the preachers in Conference that I might have their judgment and advice in a matter of such importance. Accordingly, when the proposals for sending missionaries to America were mentioned I told them in the fear of God what was on my mind, and offered myself for that service. At the same time Mr. Richard Boardman offered himself likewise. Mr. Wesley and the preachers in Conference heartily approved the proposal and immediately appointed us missionaries for that country. As we had been for several years in connection and were well known among the preachers, we judged their concurrence with what

* Narrative of Labors in South Wales performed partly in company with the Rev. John Wesley in the years 1767 and 1768. By the Rev. Joseph Pilmore, D.D., p. 157. Philadelphia : 1825. In the latter period of his life he wrote his name Pilmore.

we believed to be a call from God of the utmost importance, which made us rest fully satisfied with our appointment, as we had then sufficient reason to believe it was from God."

The appointment of Pilmoor and Boardman was made at the English Conference which convened in Leeds, August 1, 1769, the matter having been introduced by Wesley the third day of the session. They were volunteers for the heroic work. Wesley says "they willingly offered themselves for the service." Pilmoor did not offer to come here without mature deliberation and a comprehension of what the step involved, and the same, no doubt, was true of Boardman. Wesley, in accepting their proffered service, was confident they were men who would "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Pilmoor, in the two years preceding his appointment, was several times in personal association with Mr. Wesley. In the published account of his work in Wales in 1767 and 1768 he speaks of being in company with Wesley in that field on various occasions, and of there hearing him preach at sundry times. Wesley says "Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor were men well reported of by all, and, we believe, fully qualified for the work." *

When they were appointed to America there was scarcely a Protestant foreign missionary society in the world. There had been a slight movement in mission enterprise among the Danes, the Moravians, and the Dutch, but when the two Wesleyan missionaries embarked for this country, the consecrated cobbler and father of modern missions, William Carey, was only eight years old. Indeed, until the nineteenth century, there was no general advance of evangelical Protestantism upon the immense and populous regions of heathendom. Pilmoor and Boardman were among the first English missionaries that ventured upon stormy seas to seek a foreign shore. Not very long since a gentleman, in his eighty-second year, who was indulging in some reminiscent remarks said, "I saw the vessel sail that took out some of the first American missionaries that ever went to foreign lands, and now whole kingdoms have heard Messiah's name." It is as-

* Wesley's Sermons, vol. i., p. 500.

served in the Schaff-Herzog "Encyclopædia" that "the great religious revival starting with the labors of the Wesleys and Whitefield gave the impulse to recent modern missions." Dr. Abel Stevens finely says: "It is an interesting, if not a more significant coincidence, that in this very town whence the first Wesleyan missionaries were sent to America was to be organized, less than half a century later, the first Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, an institution which has transcended in success every other similar organization of Protestant Christendom."

After their appointment, and while the Conference was yet in session at Leeds, Pilmoor contemplated with strange feelings the new and extensive mission field beyond the sea. Less moral heroism was required for a British Wesleyan preacher to dare the difficulties and perils of the itinerancy in America after those first missionaries had met and surmounted them, and had cleared pathways for their successors, than was necessary in their case. They were to go to a country where the Indian roamed and his startling war-whoop rent the solitudes of vast wildernesses; and where there were but few dense communities of people of European origin, nor scarcely any settlements except on or near the Atlantic coast. They were to go to a land destined to be the seat of a free and mighty nation, which was yet mostly unpeopled, and chiefly lay in the crudeness and grandeur of its primeval wildness. They were going forth as Wesleyan pioneers to a country in which there were but few Methodists; who had but a single sanctuary, except such as were improvised from domiciles or shops, poor-houses or jails, umbrageous trees or verdant fields. They were to be voices in the wilderness crying, "Prepare the way of the Lord"—toilers subduing and preparing the ground for other laborers; sowers of the seeds of harvests to be garnered by other reapers.

If the work and the far-away field that were in their view while they yet lingered with their co-laborers at the Conference in Leeds had not excited within them unusual and conflicting feelings, they could hardly have claimed to have been men of like passions as their fellows.

It is not strange therefore that the sensitive mind of Pilmoor was for a time swept by tempestuous emotions. "After I had offered myself for the service of Christ in a foreign country," he says in his journal, "my soul remained happy in the enjoyment of peace. But it was not long before the tempter began to harass my mind with strong and fiery temptations. He set before me the difficulties and dangers that would attend it—the pain of leaving my friends and native land, the uncertainty of being received in that country, the hardships I should be exposed to, especially if the people did not receive my message nor entertain me ; and he painted the whole in such gloomy colors that I had like to have fainted and given up all, even after I had so long considered and so deliberately resolved upon it. Of all the temptations I had ever met with this was by far the sharpest. My whole soul was filled with anguish. The deep waters went over me. The enemy was ready to triumph. In this distress I called upon God, and made supplication with strong cries and tears to Him that was able to deliver. He graciously condescended to hear my voice and sent me help from His holy habitation. He rebuked the Accuser ; bruised Satan under my feet, and entirely removed all my distress and perplexity."

Thus succored, strengthened, and victorious through prayer, Pilmoor came out of his fiery conflict with the courage of an apostle. "Being now freed from all my trouble," he says, "I resolved afresh to enter upon the important mission, and determined to go forth in the name of the Lord. It was the fixed purpose of my heart to follow the Lord to a land unknown, and to be faithful unto Him, let the consequence be what it would. I was willing to suffer and even to die for the Lord Jesus, so I might glorify Him and do good to mankind. After this I had not much difficulty, God did not suffer the devil to try me any more as he did at the first, so that I was kept in perfect peace during the rest of the Conference. My soul was constantly panting after God, and longing for the success of the gospel and the increase of the redeemer's kingdom in the world. The salvation of souls lay so near my heart that I was willing to sacrifice my life to do them good

and save them from the wrath to come. When Conference was over I took leave of Mr. Wesley and the preachers, and set off to see my relations. I was somewhat afraid the trial of parting with them would be too great for them, especially my mother, but God had prepared her for it before I came. She seemed to freely give me up to Him, and was much resigned to His will. This was a fresh token of the will of God concerning my going, and greatly encouraged my soul, so that I had not the least remaining doubt that it was my duty to go. The way was made plain before me ; every obstacle was entirely removed, and I was fully satisfied about it."

Now that two able and devoted preachers of well-proven fitness for the mission had offered to go to America, and had been duly appointed thereto, the necessity of suitable pecuniary provision for their voyage was seen. This exigence was promptly met by the Conference. "As the brethren in connection with us," says Pilmoor, "were perfectly satisfied with the appointment, they generously made a collection among themselves toward the payment of our passage over. Afterward it was mentioned in London, Bristol, etc., where the people willingly offered their assistance, and money enough was soon raised to send us over the Atlantic." They were the first foreign missionaries sent forth by Methodism, and it was discovered at the outset that they could not go without funds. Men and money both are necessary for the spread of "the gospel in all lands."

The Minutes of the British Conference of 1769 contain the following record: "Question 13. We have a pressing call from our brethren at New York (who have built a preaching house) to come over and help them. Who is willing to go? Answer. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor.

"Question 14. What can we do further in token of our brotherly love? Answer. Let us now make a collection among ourselves. This was immediately done, and out of it £50 were allotted towards the payment of their debt, and about £20 given to our brethren for their passage."

Mr. Wesley subsequently gave a further account of this

important business of the Conference of 1769, together with a brief view of the progress of the new movement in America.

“Tuesday, August 1st. Our Conference began at Leeds. On Thursday I mentioned the case of our brethren at New York. For some years past several of our brethren from England and Ireland (and some of them preachers) had settled in North America, and had in various places formed societies, particularly in Philadelphia and New York. The society at New York had lately built a commodious preaching-house, and now desired our help, being in great want of money, but much more of preachers. Two of our preachers, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, willingly offered themselves for the service, by whom we determined to send over fifty pounds as a token of our brotherly love.

“Several of our preachers went over in the following years. As they taught the same doctrines with our brethren here, so they used the same discipline. And the work of God prospered in their hands so that before the Rebellion* broke out about two and twenty preachers (most of them Americans) acted in concert with each other, and near three thousand persons were united together in the American societies. These were chiefly in the provinces of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York.”†

The contribution of both men and money for the work in America displayed almost pathetically the Apostolic devotion and zeal of Wesley and his preachers. At the conference of 1769 Pilmoor and Boardman freely gave themselves. The other preachers, led by Wesley, gave their money promptly and freely. They were mostly if not wholly poor in purse, yet they raised about three hundred and fifty dollars, the greater part of which was transmitted to the New York society as “a token of brotherly love;” the rest was employed for the expenses of the missionaries. What was still better, with the money and the messengers who bore it, went the

* Mr. Wesley was a loyal Briton, and opposed to the American revolt. As we shall see, the Methodists in this country were seriously compromised during the War of Independence by his “Calm address to our American Colonies.”

† A Short History of the People called Methodists, appended by Mr. Wesley to his Concise Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. London.

heart-felt solicitude and the faith-winged prayers of the Conference for the Americans.

The Leeds Conference closed August 4, 1769. Its session was described by Wesley as a peculiarly "loving one." He says that "at the conclusion all the preachers were melted down while they were singing those lines for me :—

" 'Thou who so long hast saved me here
A little longer save,
Till, freed from sin and freed from fear,
I sink into the grave :
Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend ;
And O ! my life of mercies crown
With a triumphant end.' "

Only four days before his death, Mr. Wesley, says Dr. Whitehead, "while sitting in his chair, looked quite cheerful, and in a manner we all felt, repeated, 'Till glad I lay this body down,' " * etc., a part of the same hymn the preachers sang for him so feelingly at this memorable Conference.

The Leeds *Intelligencer* of August 8th, noticed this Conference thus : "For a week past the Rev. Mr. John Wesley has held a kind of visitation, but what they call a Conference, in this town, with several hundred of his preachers from most parts of Great Britain and Ireland, when he settled their several routes for the succeeding year. After collecting a large sum of money for the purpose of sending out missionaries for America, he yesterday morning set out for Manchester." †

Pilmoor left a brief record of this historic Conference, which is as follows : "Tuesday, August 1st, Mr. Jaco preached and at six our Conference began. The business then was to examine the character of the preachers, and it was a matter of great rejoicing that our brethren in general walk worthy of the gospel. Our evening congregation was uncommonly

* Discourse delivered at the New Chapel, City Road, March 9, 1791, at the funeral of the late John Wesley. By John Whitehead, p. 61. London, 1791.

† Lockwood's *Western Pioneers*, p. 65. The "several hundred preachers" spoken of by the Leeds *Intelligencer* as in attendance at the Conference must have included people who attended the religious services thereof, for only 116 preachers were appointed to circuits at that Conference.

large and deeply serious while Mr. Wesley was pressing them to follow after holiness. Wednesday morning we had a profitable sermon from Mr. Olivers, and at night Mr. Wesley preached again. Thursday morning Mr. Helton preached, after which we made our annual subscription and gave above a hundred guineas for the support of our superannuated brethren, widows, and children. At night Mr. Wesley gave us an excellent sermon on the reward God will give the righteous at the great day of accounts. Friday Mr. Mather preached on the great duty of improving our talents. Then the preachers were stationed and Mr. Wesley read us a letter from Mr. Whitefield which was a special blessing to the Conference in general." *

The Conference at Leeds being over Pilmoor and Boardman took leave of their brethren and began preparations for their departure. Pilmoor went to visit and say farewell to his parents and relatives. At his father's house he preached at the door to a very large congregation in the street. Most of the inhabitants of the town were there and the Divine blessing was upon the word. He also preached "with great freedom of mind to listening multitudes" at Kirby, Notoon, Barndale, and Gillimer. Many of his hearers were his relatives and neighbors, "who," he says, "all seemed much affected at the thought of parting, but I endeavored to comfort them with the hope of meeting again, if not on earth, in another and better world."

Pilmoor met Boardman at York. In proceeding thither he preached at Hovingham and Sheriffhutton. He preached at York in the "Chapel to a large and attentive audience on August 13th." Two days later he reached London. "The rest of the week," he says, "we spent in making preparations for our voyage to Philadelphia. The London Methodists treated us with the utmost kindness and respect. They plentifully supplied out wants, greatly encouraged our minds in the arduous undertaking, and wished us success in the name of the Lord."

* Pilmoor's Narrative of Labors in South Wales, performed partly in company with the Rev. John Wesley, pp. 102, 103.

The missionaries met the Rev. George Whitefield in London and with him they enjoyed a memorable interview. The great evangelical orator, whose fame filled Christendom, sent for them. Accordingly they waited upon him and "he treated us," says Pilmoor, "with all the kindness and tenderness of a father in Christ." He had given much time and labor to America, and he could not but feel concerned for the success of the first itinerant laborers whom his long-cherished friend, the Rev. John Wesley, had appointed to this vast field. His acquaintance with the country and his long service and wide travels in it gave him especial qualifications as a counsellor of the two Wesleyan preachers who were about to sail for Philadelphia. Pilmoor, in speaking of their visit to Whitefield, says, "He knew what directions to give us. Difference in sentiment made no difference in love and affection. He prayed heartily for us, and commended us to God and the word of his grace. We parted in love."

While Boardman and Pilmoor were about to sail to America, Whitefield was destined quickly to follow them on his seventh and last voyage thither. His first visit to America was in 1738 in response to the solicitation of the Wesleys. His sojourn then was short—four months—and was spent in Georgia and South Carolina. In Savannah he determined to found an orphan house, and returned to England to "make a beginning toward laying a foundation" thereof and also to receive priest's orders.* It is said that John Wesley had thirty to forty children in his care in Georgia before Whitefield went there. Mr. Wesley says, "Mr. Whitefield came over to Georgia to assist me in preaching either to the English or the Indians. As I was embarked for England before he arrived he preached to the English altogether."†

Philips, the biographer of Whitefield, says that about the year "1738 letters were received [by Whitefield] from the Wesleys and Ingham then in Georgia. Their descriptions of the moral condition of the British Colonies in America af-

* Memoirs of Whitefield, by the Rev. John Gillies, D.D.

† Wesley's Sermons, vol. i., p. 499.

fecting his heart powerfully. The chord touched ceased not to vibrate in his inmost soul. From the moment it was struck Oxford had no magnet, Hampshire no charms, the metropolis no fascination, for this young evangelist. He promptly declined a profitable curacy, intent on going abroad."

Charles Wesley, many years subsequently, described in verse to Whitefield how from America he called to him to come and how in response Whitefield "flew" hither, leaving "country, fame, and ease and friends behind." Among the great services the Wesleys rendered to America was that of inducing George Whitefield to come over.

In 1739 the great evangelist made a second voyage to America. He arrived in Philadelphia early in November and he "was immediately invited to preach in the churches, to which people of all denominations thronged." At this time he "is represented as of middle stature, slender body, fair complexion, comely appearance, and extremely bashful and modest." After a brief time spent in Philadelphia he went to New York. Being refused *the Church* he preached in the fields and in a "Meeting house." He went from New York to Philadelphia and thence travelled "on horseback" * as far south as Savannah, preaching in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. He extended his labors to various parts of New Jersey and New England. In this visit of over a year, in which he "laid the first brick" of his orphan house, his ministry was very powerful. A New England minister wrote: "His head, his heart, his hands seem to be full of his Master's business. His discourses, especially when he goes into the expository way, are very entertaining. Every eye is fixed upon him and every ear chained to his lips. Most are very much affected; many awakened and convinced, and a general seriousness excited. His address, more especially to the passions, is wonderful, and beyond what I have ever seen."

In 1744 Whitefield made his third voyage to America.

* Mr. David Creamer, in *The Methodist*, New York, March 9, 1861.

Then his stay was prolonged beyond three and a half years. His clarion voice rang out melodiously over the land, attracting all classes and subduing enchained auditories to contrition, tears, and prayer. The happy effects of his thrilling proclamation of the gospel were visible in all the vast American circuit he ranged. In 1746 he wrote from Maryland to Mr. Wesley: "If you ask how is it with me? I answer, Happy in Jesus, the Lord my Righteousness. If you ask, what am I doing? Ranging and hunting in the American woods after poor sinners and resolved to pursue the heavenly game more and more. If you ask with what success? I would answer, (O amazing grace) with great success indeed." *

Prior to this third visit to America the doctrinal breach between Whitefield and the Wesleys was accomplished. John Wesley had printed a sermon entitled, "Free Grace," in which he contended "very strongly against election, a doctrine," says Whitefield, "which I thought and do now believe was taught me of God, therefore could not possibly recede from. Thinking it my duty to do so I had written an answer at the orphan house, which though revised, I think had some too strong expressions about absolute reprobation, which the apostle leaves rather to be inferred than expressed. . . . Ten thousand times would I rather have died than part with my old friends. It would have melted any heart to have heard Mr. Charles Wesley and me weeping after prayer that if possible, the breach might be prevented." †

Whitefield in 1741 printed in London "A Letter to the Rev. John Wesley in answer to his sermon entitled 'Free Grace.'" He wrote the pamphlet in Georgia in 1740. In it, on page 10, Whitefield said: "I frankly acknowledge I believe the doctrine of Reprobation, that God intends to give saving grace through Jesus Christ only to a certain number and that the rest of mankind after the fall of Adam, being justly left of God to continue in sin will at last justly suffer that eternal death which is its proper wages. This is the established doctrine of scripture and acknowledged as such in

* Arminian Magazine, London, 1778.

† Gillies' Life of Whitefield.

the seventeenth article of the Church of England, as Bishop Burnet himself confesses ; yet dear Mr. Wesley denies it."

Whitefield delighted in the doctrine of Election, and in this Letter to Wesley on page 26 he said : "Our Lord knew for whom he died. There was an eternal compact between the father and the son. A certain number was then given him as the purchase and reward of his obedience and death. For these he prayed and not for the world. For these and these only He is now interceding and with their salvation he will be fully satisfied." He also in the same work said : "This doctrine is my daily support. I should utterly sink under a dread of my impending trials were I not firmly persuaded that God has chosen me in Christ before the foundation of the world, and that now having effectually called he will suffer none to pluck me out of his Almighty hand." In this public letter to Wesley, Whitefield professed great love for him. "I am sure," he says, "I love you in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and think I could lay down my life for your sake, but yet, dear sir, I cannot help strenuously opposing your errors upon this important subject, because I think you warmly, not designedly, oppose the truth as it is in Jesus."

Though separated in opinion the great evangelists were one in heart. Whitefield wrote his will with his own hand six months before his decease, and he annexed to it a *Nota Bene*, in which he said, "I leave a mourning ring to my honored and dear friends, and disinterested fellow-laborers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine." * Thus did he accord with Sir Thomas Browne, who, in his "*Religio Medici*," said, "I could never divide myself from any man upon the difference of an opinion or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me." This spirit of generous toleration was illustrated by Wesley also in his unbroken friendship for Whitefield.

It is said that one of his executors, Mr. Robert Keen, often asked Mr. Whitefield, "If you should die abroad, whom

* Gillies' *Life of Whitefield*.

shall we get to preach your funeral sermon? Must it be your old friend John Wesley?" and he always answered, "He is the man." Mr. Keen, therefore, on hearing of Whitefield's death, waited upon Mr. Wesley and secured his service for the mournful occasion. In the funeral discourse Wesley "bore ample testimony to the undissembled piety, the ardent zeal, and the extensive usefulness of his much loved and honored friend." Concerning Whitefield's separation from the Wesleys, John Wesley says: "A good man who met with us when we were in Oxford conversed much with dissenters and contracted strong prejudices against the Church. I mean Mr. Whitefield. Not long afterward he totally separated from us." *

Before the Wesleyan movement rose west of the Atlantic Whitefield had visited America six times. By his splendid oratory he upbore the cross before the gaze of spellbound and weeping multitudes in the more populous portions of the country and gave an impulse to the kingdom of Messiah which has never ceased. Along the coast region from Savannah to Boston he poured from his anointed lips the musical and melting strains of a blood-bought salvation. The effect was visible in the gathering of the people from far and near to his heart-piercing and soul-moving ministrations and also in their renewed natures and reformed lives. In 1739 he preached on Society Hill, Philadelphia, to a crowd of fifteen thousand people. † *The Gazette* of the day says, "The change to religion is altogether surprising; through the influence of Whitefield no books sell but religious and such is the general conversation." "On Thursday last," says the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of 1739, "the Rev. Mr. Whitefield left this city and was accompanied to Chester by one hundred and fifty horse, and preached to seven thousand people. On Friday he preached twice at Willington [probably Wilmington] to about five thousand; on Saturday at Newcastle to about two thousand five hundred, and the same evening at Christian Bridge to about three thousand. On Sunday at White Clay Creek he preached twice, resting about half an hour

* Wesley's Sermons, vol. i., p. 497.

† Watson's Annals of Philadelphia.

between the sermons, to about eight thousand, of whom three thousand it is computed came on horseback. It rained most of the time, and yet they stood in the open air." *

Dr. Benjamin Franklin has described the spiritual effects of Whitefield's marvellous ministry here. "It was wonderful," he says, "to see the change made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were becoming religious; so that one could not walk through the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street." The effect of his ministry in Philadelphia at one time was to close the dancing-school and to shut up the concert and ball-room. †

As John the Baptist was the forerunner and herald of the Founder of Christianity, so Wesley's early fellow-laborer, George Whitefield, went before the Arminian Methodism of America and prepared its way. He opened highways for its progress by preaching its vital truths and experience with an irresistible fascination and power of oratory which it may be doubted if the world ever saw surpassed, and by making the country familiar, as no doubt he did, with the spread of the Methodist revival in England, and with the name of Wesley, its great leader. It was his office also in some parts of the land to make the people acquainted with the rudiments of the word and work of redemption. "There are thousands in these southern parts," he said, in one of his letters, "that scarce ever heard of redeeming grace and love." He drove the ploughshare of a pentecostal gospel through the virgin American soil which the Wesleyan preachers afterward cultivated, and from which they reaped abounding harvests. The popular ear was opened by his unctuous eloquence to receive their plain, evangelical message. Mr. Wesley says: "All men owned that God was with" Whitefield, and "by his ministry a line of communication was formed from Georgia to New England." He also says that in a tour Whitefield made, in April, 1740, "through Penn-

* Quoted in Bishop Thompson's *Evidences of Revealed Religion*.

† Watson's *Annals of Philadelphia*.

sylvania, the Jerseys, and New York, incredible multitudes flocked to hear, among whom were abundance of negroes. In all places the greater part of the hearers were affected to an amazing degree. In some places thousands cried out aloud, many as in the agonies of death. Most were drowned in tears, some turned pale as death, others were wringing their hands, others lying on the ground, others sinking into the arms of their friends, almost all lifting up their eyes and calling for mercy." *

Not only did the two missionaries who were about to sail for their distant field enjoy a memorable interview for counsel and prayer with Whitefield in London, but it was their privilege likewise there to meet another eminent personage, whose lofty and inspiring songs have given him a great and enduring celebrity. On the last Sabbath of their delay in the English metropolis—August 20, 1769—they saw the famous lyrist of Methodism and received his benediction. Pilmoor says: "The Rev. Charles Wesley preached and administered the sacrament in Spitalfields. God was remarkably present among the people, and it was truly a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. At five I preached in the foundry to a numerous congregation with great enlargedness of heart, and was abundantly blessed in my own soul. Charles Wesley met the society, and afterward sent for Mr. Boardman and me into his room, where he spoke freely and kindly to us about our sea voyage and the important business in which we had engaged. After giving us much good advice he sent us forth with his blessing in the name of the Lord. This was of great advantage to us, as it afforded us the pleasing reflection that we had not acted contrary to the mind of our brethren and fathers in Christ. We had what we believed a call from God; we had the approbation and authority of three godly clergymen of the Church of England, and likewise the authority of more than a hundred preachers of the gospel, who are laboring day and night to save souls from destruction and advance the kingdom of Christ. Hence we concluded we had full power, ac-

* Wesley's Sermons, vol. i., p. 473.

according to the New Testament, to preach the everlasting gospel and to do all possible good to mankind."

Thus, before leaving the English shore, the first regularly appointed Wesleyan missionaries to America held personal intercourse with three of the most illustrious and apostolic men in the later history of Christianity, in relation to the mission they were about to inaugurate in the new world. On the altitude of his fame John Wesley stands singly and unchallenged, as the greatest religious reformer since Luther. George Whitefield probably was the mightiest itinerant evangelist the world has seen since the era of the apostles. Charles Wesley's popularity as a Christian poet has never waned, but his celebrity as one of the greatest hymnists of the world is still extending. Of whom, in the place they filled and the influence they impressed upon their age and the ages following, can superior greatness be affirmed, at least in modern times, in the English-speaking world? By whom, indeed, since the age of the apostles, has the apostolic spirit and power been more fully illustrated than by that immortal trio of Christian leaders and reformers—the entrancing and overwhelming pulpit orator, the glorious and deathless evangelical singer, and the great and holy chieftain of a world-stirring reproduction of the Pentecost? From their presence, counselled by their wisdom, inspired by their prayers, and bearing their benediction, Boardman and Pilmoor went forth to encounter billows and tempests, and to give propulsion to the new reformation in the nascent empire of freedom across the Atlantic Ocean.

Concerning the movements of Boardman after the Leeds Conference rose, we know but little. He, however, was with Pilmoor in London before they sailed. But for Pilmoor's eloquent narrative, which has descended to us in manuscript, we should be without information concerning most of the labors of either of those preachers in connection with Methodism in America. It is probable that Boardman, like Pilmoor, kept some record of his work, but no such product of his pen seems to be extant. He was not, like his colleague, favored with long life, and save a few autograph letters, and

three or four epistles in print, his writings probably have perished. In Pilmoor's Journal we get interesting glimpses of Boardman's travels and labors, but the loss of his own diary, if such he kept, is irreparable.

Tradition gives us one beautiful incident of his ministry in 1769, which transpired when he was going up to London to embark for America. He stopped for a night at a small village called Moneyash, in Derbyshire, and in the evening he preached there on the prayer of Jabez. A young woman—Mary Redfern—was deeply moved by the sermon and became a Christian. She subsequently married William Bunting, and settled in Manchester. The memory of the discourse she heard from Boardman ten years before led her to name her only son Jabez, "a memento of her gratitude and a prophecy of his history." While he was an infant she carried him to Oldham Street chapel, and presented him to Mr. Wesley, that he might give his blessing to the child. Mrs. Bunting took her boy to the Methodist meetings, and when he was fifteen years old he was excluded from a love-feast because he had no ticket nor note of admission from the preacher. His mother said to him: "I do not know what you think of it, Jabez, but to me it seems an awful thing that, having been carried there, you should now be excluded by your own fault." Jabez afterward declared that "the blow was struck in the right place." He soon became a member of the Methodist society. Not many years after this he was known as a rising Wesleyan preacher. He became the greatest leader of British Methodism since Wesley. Of statesmanlike intellect, sagacious in counsel, strong and eloquent in speech, his authority in the English Conference "was for many years as powerful as that of one man can ever be in a free assembly." He administered most successfully the Wesleyan Missionary Society. In the pulpit he wielded extraordinary power, and his ministry was very fruitful of conversions. In this great Methodist preacher we see the far-reaching effects of a single discourse by Richard Boardman.

A relic is preserved which is a memorial of his sermon on Jabez (1 Chron. iv. 9, 10), and of its extraordinary fruitful-

ness in the lives and works of the Buntings. It is a cane, and it was presented to the Methodist Historical Society in Philadelphia, November 10, 1881, by the Rev. Bishop Peck. In presenting it the bishop gave its history thus : " I hold in my hand the staff of Richard Boardman. On his way to the port from which he sailed to America, he preached a sermon concerning Jabez. Miss Mary Redfern was in the congregation. She was powerfully impressed and soon converted. She married William Bunting, and named her first-born Jabez. This son was the distinguished Rev. Dr. Jabez Bunting, the master mind of British Methodism. After the death of Mr. Boardman, this cane was given to Dr. Bunting in memory of his name and the conversion of his mother. At his death it became the charge of his son, T. Percival Bunting, Esq., an English barrister. He entrusted it with me, requesting that it should be finally left where it would be carefully preserved and convenient of access. Mr. Boardman preached his first sermon in America in Philadelphia, and became very dear to the Church here. Believing that you would consider it a valuable historical relic, I take the liberty to present it to the Philadelphia Conference Historical Society."

" On the twenty-first of August, 1769," says Pilmoor, " after preaching once more in the foundry, we took leave of our London friends, went to the Carolina Coffee House, where we met with Captain Sparks, with whom we were to sail, and two gentlemen who were to go as passengers with us. We took the coach for Gravesend, where we embarked in the evening on board the Mary and Elizabeth for Philadelphia. In the morning we weighed anchor and dropped down the river as far as Deal, but the wind proving contrary, we were obliged to lay at anchor in the Road for several days. While we lay in the Downs I had fine opportunity for study, and found my mind in general much resigned to the will of God."

On September 1st a fine and favoring breeze prevailed, the anchor was immediately hoisted, and the voyage began. The next day being Sunday they " had prayers upon the

quarter-deck." Boardman preached on "The great day of His wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?" The behavior of the sailors and steerage passengers was so excellent that another service was held on deck in the afternoon. The missionaries improved their time on the ocean in prayers, in study, and in sacred ministrations. For some time they suffered from sea-sickness, so they "could not help each other." They were well cared for, however, by the captain and the steward of the cabin.

When they had been sailing four weeks they encountered that terror of the mariner, a storm at sea. It arose about seven in the morning. For a short time the ship kept on her course, but the violence of the tempest soon made it necessary "to haul in all the sails and lay to" until it ceased. The great billows were of mountainous height, and so furious was the storm "it seemed utterly impossible for the ship to live or keep above water." The heavens frowned with gloom, and the ocean was a spectacle of appalling grandeur,

"Inspiring awe till breath itself stands still."

Amid this terrific war of the elements Pilmoor and Boardman enjoyed a blissful inward serenity, reminding one of Wordsworth's

"Central Peace,
Subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."

They stood upon the dizzy deck, gazing dauntlessly upon the wrathful floods, sustained by the Everlasting Arms. "In the morning," says Pilmoor, "when I went upon deck and saw the danger we were in, instantly my heart was filled with the pure love of God and all fear of death and hell was entirely taken away. I had not a shadow of a doubt of my acceptance, and was fully assured if I died then I should be eternally happy with God. And this continued all the day, nor did it ever forsake me during the storm. Of all the days of my life this was by far the most happy. My soul was more resigned to all the dispensations of Providence than ever it had been before and life or death was equal. Surely the goodness of God is infinite and His mercy is upon them

that fear Him. Being thus blessed my heart was emboldened and I could say :

“ ‘ When passing through the watery deep
 I ask in faith His promised aid ;
 The waves an awful distance keep
 And shrink from my devoted head ;
 Fearless their violence I dare,
 They cannot harm while God is there.’ ”

Of his experience in this storm Boardman wrote to Mr. Wesley : “ When it appeared impossible that the vessel should live long amid the conflicting elements I found myself exceedingly happy. I do not remember to have had one doubt of being eternally saved should the mighty waters swallow us up.”

The ship came to land on October 20, 1769, and the next day Boardman and Pilmoor disembarked at Gloucester Point, N. J., four miles south of Philadelphia. Lee, Bangs and Stevens, in their histories of American Methodism, give the date of the landing at Gloucester as the 24th of that month. Pilmoor says it was on the *twenty-first* of October that they stepped for the first time upon the shore of the Delaware. Their devout feelings broke forth into thanksgivings as they set their feet upon this Western Continent, whose destinies were to be affected by their labors and with whose religious history their names were to be indelibly interwoven. “ When we got on shore we joined in a doxology,” says Pilmoor, “ and gave praise to God for our deliverance and all the mercies bestowed upon us during the passage. When we had rested a little while at a public house Mr. Boardman and I walked up to the city.”

The *Pennsylvania Gazette* of November 2, 1769, has the following advertisement of the return voyage of the ship which carried Pilmoor and Boardman over the Atlantic :

“ For LONDON

“ The SHIP

“ MARY and ELIZABETH,

“ JAMES SPARKS, MASTER,

"Is a good ship and has extraordinary accommodations for passengers ; part of her cargo ready to go on board, and will sail with all convenient speed. For freight or passage apply to John Head, the Master on board, or at the London Coffee House."

While the two missionaries are walking from their place of landing to Philadelphia, let us scan more minutely their previous history.

Joseph Pilmoor was born in Yorkshire, England. Lockwood, in his work on Boardman and Pilmoor, entitled "The Western Pioneers," gives the date of Pilmoor's birth as October 31, 1739. The Rev. Richard D. Hall, of Philadelphia, who knew Pilmoor well and was a convert of his ministry, gives the time of his birth as "about the year 1734." * The Rev. S. F. Hotchkin, in a sketch of Pilmoor in the *Standard of the Cross*, Philadelphia, of March 16, 1889, says he "died in his eighty-sixth year, July 24, 1825." This is almost in accord with Lockwood's date of his birth. Hall gives the same date of his death, but says he was then in his ninety-first year. The same date of his decease is inscribed on his tomb, and his age given thereon is eighty-seven. His conversion is said to have occurred when he was sixteen years old, through the agency of the Wesleyan evangelists. Hall attributes Pilmoor's conversion to the instrumentality of Mr. Wesley, and also says Wesley gave him a place in his school at Kingswood, where he studied English literature and also Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He presented Hall with a Hebrew grammar which was compiled by, and contained the autograph of, Mr. Wesley. Pilmoor's school life continued at Kingswood, according to Hall, for three or four years, after which Wesley sent him forth as one of his "helpers." He preached acceptably and successfully in many parts of England "and through all the counties of South Wales." He was useful, it is said, among the higher orders of society, and enjoyed the kindness of Lady Huntingdon and Lady Maxwell.

In the beginning of his religious life Pilmoor was much benefited by the ministry of Dr. Conyers, who was a clergy-

* Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. v.

man of the Church of England. He held Socinian opinions, but came to the experience of a Scriptural conversion, and thenceforth was exceedingly evangelical in his teaching. Then his ministry became very successful, and he gathered his numerous converts into classes. Pilmoor refers to Conyers in his Journal, under the date of April 4, 1772, thus: "After spending the morning in study I was glad to embrace an opportunity of writing to the Rev. Mr. Conyers in Yorkshire, who was of infinite service to me when I set my face toward Heaven and resolved to run the appointed race. His ministry was so blessed to my soul that I believe I shall have reason to praise God on his account to all eternity."

The precise time when Pilmoor went forth as a member of Wesley's itinerancy is not certainly known. He held, according to Hall, a certificate signed by Mr. Wesley which represented him "as having grace, gifts and success." Of him "the first record in the official minutes is 1765, when Joseph Pilmoor is received on trial, but has no appointment; while in 1766 his name appears among those who are admitted, and he is stationed in Cornwall." In 1767 his appointment was Wales, and in 1768 he was returned to the same field.

The statistics in the minutes of the British Conference reveal numerical progress in Wales during Pilmoor's ministry there. The published narrative of his service in that field shows that he was zealous and laborious. One of the incidents of his ministry there was an indignity he received from a minister. "While I was preaching" he says, "a clergyman and two or three of his companions got behind a wall, and threw several eggs, but they missed their mark and I concluded in peace."* Brave, cultured, unctuous, eloquent, and of commanding voice and presence Pilmoor was an approved instrument, a workman that needed not to be ashamed.

Richard Boardman's early history is involved in obscu-

* Narrative of Labors in South Wales, performed partly in company with the Rev. John Wesley, in the years 1767-68, by the Rev. Joseph Pilmore, D.D. Philadelphia, 1825. While he was a Wesleyan preacher here he spelled his name Pilmoor.

rity. Only glimpses of his career prior to his American voyage can be obtained. Even the place of his birth is uncertain. Lockwood says he "is supposed by well sustained tradition to have been born at Gillimoor, but the most careful research has failed to furnish any authentic record of his early religious life. He entered the ministry about 1763 and travelled successively in the Grimsby, Limerick, and Cork circuits, closing this period of his labors in the picturesque tract of country known as the Dales circuit. Here the primitive evangelists had to prosecute their arduous toils amid peculiar difficulties, crossing the lofty mountains and threading the numerous ravines which intersect the counties of Yorkshire, Cumberland and Westmoreland."* His appointment in 1767 was York; in 1768 Dales. From Lockwood we learn that Boardman's wife Olive, and their daughter Mary, died in January, 1769. Lockwood quotes a quarterly meeting record of money of the amount of two pounds and two shillings paid to Boardman for the burial of his wife. Thus in the grief of a double bereavement he responded to the call to come over the Atlantic. Wesley, as extant documents show, recognized Boardman's worth and talents. A high authority has described him as "a man of great piety, of an amiable disposition, and possessed of a strong understanding;" and also as "greatly beloved and universally respected wherever his lot was cast."†

We are now to see the two missionaries entering upon their American labors. "Here," says an early Methodist writer, "commenced a new era in Methodism. The societies which were hitherto independent of each other were now united to the societies in England, and received travelling preachers from Mr. Wesley."

* The Western Pioneers, by John P. Lockwood, London, 1881.

† The Methodist Memorial, by the Rev. Charles Atmore.

CHAPTER II.

BOARDMAN AND PILMOOR AT WORK IN AMERICA.

THE first missionaries appointed to America by the Rev. John Wesley reached Philadelphia on or about the twenty-first day of October, 1769. On that day, at least, they came on shore at Gloucester Point, and after resting "a little while at a public house," they walked to Philadelphia.

We will here pause to glance at the city and the country which Boardman and Pilmoor entered nine weeks after their embarkation at London.

Philadelphia in 1769 was the commercial and social metropolis of America and in 1774 became the seat of the Colonial Congress. Not until a half century later did New York become its equal in population. There were in Philadelphia in 1769, it is said, 4,474 houses with 30,000 inhabitants.* It was the home of Benjamin Franklin, whose great fame as a philosopher had shed enduring lustre upon the country. There was the library which he founded and which had developed into a centre of literature for the city. The University of Pennsylvania was also there, and its long-famed school of medicine was founded in 1765. Dr. Rush, distinguished as a citizen, a physician, and a statesman, was in 1769 delivering medical lectures in that school. The State house, now known as Independence Hall, stood then, as it stands now, on Chestnut Street. Commenced in 1729, the main structure was completed in 1734. The right and left wings were added in 1739-40. There were also other public buildings, and commodious churches.

Philadelphia, Boston, and New York in 1769 comprised nearly all the important cities of the continent. Washington

* *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxxi., p. 134.

City did not exist until above twenty years later. Baltimore was scarcely forty years old, and in 1752 had only 200 population. The great western cities had not been founded when Boardman and Pilmoor came hither, save St. Louis, which was then rising into prominence as a centre of the fur trade of the Missouri. Illinois did not then contain over 1,500 inhabitants. Now its leading city has a great population, and was the seat of the world's Columbian Exposition. Vincennes was then the only settlement in Indiana, with less than 500 people. We are told that John Finley, a backwoodsman of North Carolina, in 1768 passed through Kentucky and failed to discover a single white man's cabin "in all the enchanting wilderness." The site of the city of Lexington was covered with trees until 1780.* The total population of the territory which now forms the great States of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee was hardly three thousand, and that of all the colonies in 1769 probably did not much exceed two and a half millions. They mostly dwelt along the bays, rivers, and inlets of the Atlantic coast, and the settlements probably did not reach on the average over a hundred miles from the sea. As late as 1802 Marietta contained somewhat above two hundred houses and was one of the largest towns in the State of Ohio.

American life in 1769 was chiefly rural. "The western villages abounded in wheat, Indian corn, and swine," with a sufficiency of beef cattle. Trade was burdened with the cost of transportation. All English goods sent westward were made dear by the expense of land carriage from Philadelphia to Fort Pitt, now Pittsburg. The distance is 300 miles, and in 1802 the road was described as lying through "a country whose hilly surface, covered with dark forests, gives it the appearance of an agitated sea."

The simple machines for breaking flax and spinning and weaving wool were in common use in the homes of the people in 1769, and the garments they wore were as a rule wholly manufactured by wives, and mothers, and daughters. The mechanic arts in use here were simple and few, and literature

* Edinburgh Review, vol. vii., p. 159.

had hardly begun to bud. Jefferson indeed wrote, as late as 1807, that "our countrymen are so much occupied with the busy scenes of life that they have little time to write or invent."*

Yet the period of the arrival of the first two Wesleyan missionaries was a golden age of American intellect. Princeton College was already a power in the land. Rutgers was established at New Brunswick in New Jersey, William and Mary in Virginia, Columbia College in New York City, and with Harvard in Massachusetts, Yale in Connecticut, and the University in Philadelphia were training men for intellectual leadership. About 1769 Dartmouth College developed in New Hampshire from the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock's Indian boys' school in Connecticut. The Earl of Dartmouth, one of its trustees and the custodian of the funds which were received for it from England, was, it is said, a friend of John Wesley and a Methodist.† Washington and Jefferson were then in the Virginia Legislature, and with Otis, Ames, and Adams were developing into greatness. Jonathan Edwards had closed his illustrious career. Patrick Henry was the foremost orator of his time, and Franklin was a celebrity in two hemispheres. The Edinburgh Review in 1817 declared in a leading article that "in one point of view the name of Franklin must be considered as standing higher than any of the others which illustrated the eighteenth century. Distinguished as a statesman, he was equally great as a philosopher; thus uniting in himself a rare degree of excellence in both those pursuits to excel in either of which is deemed the highest praise. Franklin would have been entitled to the glory of a first-rate discoverer in science—one who had largely extended the bounds of human knowledge—although he had not stood second to Washington alone in gaining for human liberty the most splendid and guiltless of its triumphs." Seventeen years before the arrival of Boardman and Pilmoor, Franklin achieved his great discovery of the identity of lightning with electricity which spread his fame over the civilized world.

The clouds of revolution already gloomed the sky. The

* *Memoirs, Correspondence, and Miscellanies of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. iv. p. 33.

† *A Concise History of the American People*. By Jacob Harris Patton, A.M.

resistance to English taxation was fast turning the colonies into rebellion. The year 1763 has been regarded as the beginning of the revolutionary epoch, because in that year the British ministry determined upon securing revenues from the American colonies by taxing them. In 1765 the Stamp Act passed the English Parliament. It produced excitement in America. The New York newspapers denounced the law and opposition to it was general and determined. In 1766 the Act was repealed, and the event brought great joy to the colonies. Still England was fixed in its policy of gathering revenues from the Americans, to which the latter were uncompromisingly hostile. The very month the Wesleyan missionaries landed in New Jersey (October, 1769) the General Assembly of that province passed a resolution of thanks to the merchants and traders of the colony, and to the colonies of Pennsylvania and New York, for their patriotism displayed "in withholding importations of British merchandize until the restrictive acts of Parliament be repealed." *

The public journals of that period show that this was a chief topic of thought and speech in the country in 1769. Meetings were held, resolutions were adopted and printed, and leagues were formed with reference to the exciting controversy. In England also there was considerable popular interest in the subject. The ship which brought the Wesleyan missionaries hither at the same time brought a letter which appears to have been addressed by a Quaker to George III., and was published in a London Journal. *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser* of Philadelphia, in its issue of Thursday, October 26, 1769, says: "Monday last arrived Captain Sparks from London † by whom we have the following advices: From the *London Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* :

" 14th of the 8th month 1769.

" FRIEND G——

" I have heard that thy faithful subject and friend George Whitefield is soon going over to America; his conversations

* History of New Jersey, by J. R. Sypher and E. A. Apgar, p. 97.

† The ship came to land at Gloucester Saturday, October 21st. It appears the Captain brought it to Philadelphia, Monday the 23d.

and orations have a great influence in that country. Wouldst thou not do well to consult with honest George, and if thou hast thoughts of easing the Americans (as some writers affirm) canst thou find a better man to communicate thy intentions by. All he says will be credited, and all he says from thine own resolutions communicated to him will have great weight and perhaps bring about a revolution that will be to thy people's contentment and thine own reputation."

Religious institutions had existed in the American colonies long before 1769. The churches were generally Calvinistic. "The pilgrims of Plymouth," says Bancroft, "were Calvinists; the best influence of South Carolina came from the Calvinists of France: William Penn was the disciple of the Huguenots: the ships of Holland that first brought colonists to Manhattan were filled with Calvinists." In the middle colonies the Presbyterians were considerably numerous. In New England the Puritan element held sway and the churches were mostly of the Congregational Order, but there were also Baptists and Quakers. In the South the Baptists were somewhat numerous, but the Church of England was the principal ecclesiastical organization there. It also had adherents and influential churches in the northern colonies, especially in the cities. In Philadelphia particularly, and in contiguous places, there were many Quakers. The Roman Catholics were also here but not notably numerous, except in the province of Maryland.

In portions of the country there was much ignorance respecting true religion and a dearth of Christian preaching and ordinances. This was particularly true of much of the South. The Rev. Devereux Jarrett, an Episcopal clergyman of Virginia, says that when he was chosen rector of the Bath parish in the county of Dinwiddie, in 1763, "ignorance and profaneness prevailed among all ranks and degrees" in its bounds, "so that I doubt if even the form of godliness was to be found in one family of this large and populous parish." Jarratt proclaimed the evangelical truths to the people, but he says "my doctrines were quite new to them, and were neither preached

nor believed by any other clergyman, so far as I could learn, throughout the province.”* After a decade had passed he wrote to Mr. Wesley in 1773: “We have ninety-five parishes in the colony and all except one I believe are supplied with clergymen. But alas! you will understand the rest. I know of but one clergyman of the Church of England who appears to have the power and spirit of vital religion. All seek their own and not the things that are Christ’s. Is not our situation then truly deplorable?”† In North Carolina there was great destitution of religious teaching and ordinances. Pilmoor was himself in that province in 1772 and found a lamentable lack of preachers. “It is,” he says, “200 miles wide and is settled near 400 miles in length, and the church established as in England, yet in all this country there are but eleven ministers.” Madison in Virginia wrote in 1774: “Poverty and luxury prevail among all sects; pride, ignorance and knavery among the priesthood, and vice and wickedness among the laity.”

Respecting the low condition of religion and morals in the Episcopal Church in this country in those early times, a clergyman has offered the following remarks: “There has existed a special reason for this deadness in the Episcopal Church. This church sprung from the Church of England. It was established in this country by the English. Consequently all the evils incident to a union between church and state were transplanted along with it. The moment the American Revolution broke us loose from the mother country, however, causes were put in operation to liberate us from those evils which were manifestly incidental.”‡

In the middle and eastern provinces there was better provision for the spiritual wants of the people than in most parts of the South, yet even there in sections remote from the populous centres there was much need of religious facilities and agencies. Boardman made a lengthened tour, and says:

* A Brief Narrative of the revival of religion in Virginia. In a letter to a friend. London, 1778.

† Arminian Magazine, p. 379. London, 1778.

‡ A Walk about Zion; by the Rev. John A. Clark, D.D., p. 59. New York, 1842.

“The rides are long, the roads bad, and the living very poor. In the greater part of this round the people were wicked and ignorant to a most lamentable degree, destitute of the fear and regardless of the worship of God.” *

There was much spiritual apathy in the eastern provinces. Respecting the churches of New England, the biographer of President Edwards says: “So vast a proportion of the first planters of this country were members of the Christian church, that not to be a church member was a public disgrace, and no man who had not this qualification was considered capable of holding any civil office. The children of the first planters, with comparatively few exceptions, followed the example of their parents and enrolled their names in the church calendar; and there is reason to believe that a large proportion of them were possessed of real piety. Still there can be no doubt that a considerable number of them were of a different character. In the third and fourth generations the number of this latter class increased to such a degree as to constitute, if not a majority, yet a large minority of the whole population. But such is the influence of national customs it was still thought as necessary to a full qualification for office to make a public profession of religion as before; and the church, by thus inclosing within its pale the whole rising generation, gathered in a prodigious number of hypocrites, and to make a profession of religion began to be on the part of numbers an act of the same import as it has been on the part of the civil, military, and naval officers of England, ‘to qualify’ by partaking of the Lord’s Supper.”

Into this great country, which was yet to receive its national form, and to become the chief theatre of evangelical Protestantism, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor came in the fall of 1769 to make a contribution to it of Christian influence, truth, and service of which it was in sore need. Amid the already audible, though distant, thunder of the gathering Revolutionary tempest, they entered the land as divinely sent messengers of peace. They did not avert the

* Letter of Richard Boardman to Mrs. Mary Thorn; in Lockwood’s *Western Pioneers*.

storm, but they did their part in preparing the colonies to abide it. Their coming was altogether opportune, and their work, as we shall see, was fruitful of important and enduring results.

The two missionaries received very courteous attention from Captain Sparks during their voyage, and when they reached Philadelphia he cordially welcomed them to his home, and they were hospitably entertained by him and Mrs. Sparks. Of the captain's courtesy and hospitality Pilmoor remarks: "His generosity at the last was truly noble. May our God and Saviour abundantly reward and bless him for all his kindness to us in time and eternity."

It was the intention of the missionaries to proceed immediately to New York, for they were not aware of the existence of a Methodist society in Philadelphia. The zealous military preacher, however, had planted Methodism there in a sail-loft a year or two previously.

While walking in a Philadelphia street, the newly arrived preachers were accosted by a man who had been a Methodist in Ireland, where he had seen Mr. Boardman. He told them intelligence of their arrival had been received, and that he was then out seeking them. He took them to his home. Thus Irish Methodism, which gave origin to the Wesleyan movement in America, was, through one of its sons, the first to hail and welcome to the country Mr. Wesley's first missionaries.

Captain Webb had been some days in Philadelphia when they arrived, and it was his privilege to greet them, perhaps in the home of the Irishman where they were temporary guests. Of their first interview with Webb, Pilmoor says: "In a little while Captain Webb came to us and gave us a hearty welcome to America. Our souls rejoiced to meet with such a valiant soldier of Jesus in this distant land, especially as he was a real Methodist." In the evening they attended St. Paul's church, and heard "a very useful sermon on 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'" The next day they opened their mission with a sermon by Boardman "to a small but serious

congregation, on the call of Abraham to go forth into the land of Canaan." The following day Boardman started for New York, leaving Pilmoor in Philadelphia "to try what might be done for the honor of God and the salvation of immortal souls."

Of his journey to and arrival in New York Boardman promptly wrote to Mr. Wesley, under the date of November 4, 1769, saying: "When I came to Philadelphia I found a little society and preached to a great number of people. I left brother Pilmoor there and set out for New York. Coming to a large town on my way, and seeing a barrack, I asked a soldier if there were any Methodists belonging to it? 'Oh, yes,' said he, 'we are all Methodists, that is, we should all be glad to hear a Methodist preach.' 'Well,' said I, 'tell them in the barrack that a Methodist preacher just come from England intends to preach here to-night.' He did so, and the inn was soon surrounded with soldiers. I asked, 'Where do you think I can get a place to preach in?' (it being then dark). One of them said, 'I will go and see if I can get the Presbyterian Meeting House.' He did so, and soon returned to tell me he had prevailed, and that the bell was just going to ring to let all the town know. A great company soon got together and seemed much affected. The next day I came to New York." Thus this herald of grace, who, while he was on his way to embark for Philadelphia, proclaimed the word which was so fruitful of blessing to Mary Redfern—and through her to her great son, Jabez Bunting, and through him to England and the world—now in America, sowed "beside all waters."

The condition of the Wesleyan work in New York, was found by the missionary to be very hopeful. "Our house," he erroneously says, "contains about seventeen hundred hearers." Such a multitude could not have been in any manner, nor even the half thereof, seated within its walls. To what this obvious error is due—whether to the haste and oversight of the writer or to a mistake of the printer we know not. Dr. Stevens adopts the suggestion that the number intended to be given by Boardman was *seven* rather than

seventeen hundred. Even that number would have been an extravagant estimate of the chapel's capacity. "About a third of those who attend the preaching," continues Boardman, "get in, the rest are glad to hear without. There appears such a willingness in the Americans to hear the Word as I never saw before. They have no preaching in some parts of the back settlements. I doubt not but an effectual door will be opened among them. Oh, may He now give His Son the heathen for His inheritance.

"The number of blacks that attend the preaching affects me much. One of them came to tell me she could neither eat nor sleep, because her master would not suffer her to come to hear the word. She wept exceedingly, saying, 'I told my master I would do more work than ever I used to do if he would but let me come; nay, that I would do everything in my power to be a good servant.'

"I find a great want of every gift and grace for the great work before me. I should be glad of your advice. But, dear sir, what shall I say to almost everyone I see? They ask, Does Mr. Wesley think he shall come over to see us?"

John Wesley seems to have considered seriously Boardman's question. He wrote to the Rev. Walter Sellon, from London, December 30, 1769—probably after he received Boardman's letter—and said: "It is not determined whether I should go to America or not. I have been importuned for some time, but *nil sat firmi video*. I must have a clear call before I am at liberty to leave Europe." Almost a year later he was still thinking of coming hither, as he shows in a letter of December 14, 1770, to Mrs. Marston, the autograph original of which, suitably framed, was presented to the New York Methodist Preachers' Meeting, by Bishop Wilson, of the Reformed Episcopal Church, through the Rev. Dr. J. O. Peck, on the centennial of Mr. Wesley's death, March 2, 1891, after a historical address by the author of this work. In that letter Wesley says: "If I live till spring, and have a clear, pressing call, I am as ready to embark for America as for Ireland. All places are alike to me. I am attached to none in particular. Wherever the work of the Lord is to be

carried on, *that* is my place for *to-day*. And we live only for to-day ; it is not our part to take thought for to-morrow." The idea of sailing to America was still in Mr. Wesley's mind as late certainly as 1773, for on the second of March of that year he wrote Mr. Asbury, " that the time of his coming over to America is not yet, being detained by the building of a chapel." * The " clear call " to visit America seems not to have come to the illustrious evangelist whose parish was the world. Had he been convinced that duty beckoned him hither, he certainly would have dared the storms and floods of the ocean, notwithstanding he had passed the life-mark of " three score years and ten." He wrote to Whitefield as we shall see of the appeals he received from New York and Philadelphia to visit America, and of his serious consideration of the same.

Shortly after his arrival in New York, Boardman and the authorities of the society made a compact concerning the labors of the preachers there and the pecuniary compensation they should receive. This compact is on record in the " Old Book " of John Street, and is as follows : " Mr. Richard Boardman, assistant to and preacher in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, also Philip Embury, local preacher, and William Lupton, trustee and steward (in New York), thinking it necessary that some regulations should be made for the preachers in New York, agreed, on the first of November, 1769 : First, that each preacher, having labored three months in New York, shall receive three guineas to provide themselves with wearing apparel. Secondly, that there shall be preaching on Sunday morning and Sunday evening ; also on Tuesday and Thursday evenings ; and the preacher to meet the society every Wednesday evening." There does not appear to be extant any account of such an arrangement with the society in Philadelphia. Pilmoor says nothing of an agreement respecting work and compensation there. The primitive records of that society, unlike those of New York, did not escape oblivion.

In the evening of the day of Boardman's departure for

* Asbury's Journal, vol. i., p. 72.

New York, Pilmoor preached in Philadelphia. He describes his congregation as "fine" and "attentive," but he says: "I was greatly straitened in my own mind, and felt but very little freedom. God was pleased to humble me by leaving me to myself and made me ashamed of my own unworthiness. Others may, perhaps, preach very fluently and with great accuracy without any assistance from above, but that is nothing to me. I find it an easy matter to *talk*, but to *preach* the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is widely different." Pilmoor became quickly and fully employed in ministerial labor.

It has heretofore been held that William Watters was the first Methodist itinerant in America and that Richard Owings, otherwise called Owen, was a preacher before him. In his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church" Dr. Abel Stevens says Richard Owen was "the first native Methodist preacher of the Continent, who labored faithfully and successfully as a local preacher for some years." Pilmoor's Journal shows that there was a laborer in the American Wesleyan field before either of those evangelists appeared therein. A man, hitherto almost unknown to history, appears entitled to the distinction of having been the first in the vast series of Methodist preachers thrust forth in America. Five days after Pilmoor's arrival, namely, on October 26, 1769, in Philadelphia he wrote of an interview with him thus: "I spent an hour in the morning very comfortably with Edward Evans, an old disciple of Jesus, and one who has stood fast in the faith for nearly thirty years. He is a man of good understanding and sound experience in the things of God, and his conversation was both entertaining and profitable." Evans, according to Pilmoor, was a convert of Whitefield, and after the arrival of the two Wesleyan missionaries he became united with them in fellowship and labor. He was closely identified with the Philadelphia society, and his name appears, as we shall see, in the deed of its first church. He preached there and in contiguous places, and he especially itinerated in New Jersey. He died before a Conference was held in the country, and, therefore,

had no opportunity to be honored with a record in the official documents of the new movement. We shall meet him at various times in the course of our narrative.

After his interview with Mr. Evans, Pilmoor, in company with Captain Webb, called upon the Rev. Mr. Stringer, rector of St. Paul's, who received them very courteously. Pilmoor says Mr. Stringer's ministry had been "greatly blessed in the city and many added to the Church." He wrote of him to Mr. Wesley in a way which suggests that he was not unknown to the latter. "I have been to visit Mr. Stringer, who is very well," says Pilmoor to Wesley. "He bears a noble testimony to our blessed Jesus, and I hope God does bless him." It is suggested in the *London Methodist Magazine* of 1818 (page 641) that Stringer was originally a Methodist preacher but was ordained in the Church of England. He is elsewhere represented as having come to Philadelphia with a recommendation from Whitefield, and it is also related that St. Paul's Church received him as rector, but returned him to England for ordination as a qualification for filling the position. He seems to have held fraternal relations with the Methodists in Philadelphia.

CHAPTER III.

MINISTRY OF PILMOOR, WEBB, AND WILLIAMS IN PHILADELPHIA IN THE FALL OF 1769—PURCHASE OF ST. GEORGE'S.

THE first Sunday of Pilmoor's ministry in Philadelphia, October 29, 1769, was filled with activity. At seven in the morning he met "a fine congregation," to whom he discoursed on the first Psalm. Afterward he went to St. Paul's and heard a "profitable sermon by Mr. Stringer." Having advertised preaching on the common adjoining the city at five o'clock, he repaired to the place, where he found a vast multitude of people. He ascended "the stage erected for the horse race and was presently surrounded with several thousands of genteel persons, who," he says, "behaved with the utmost attention while I declared Christ Jesus the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people." Stevens says Pilmoor opened his ministry "from the steps of the old State-house." This, obviously, is an error. Pilmoor mentions only three occasions before this on the common, that he preached in the city. Two were in the evening, the other at seven o'clock on Sunday morning, and he gives no hint that any one of these meetings was held at the State-house.

After the open-air service at the race-ground Pilmoor met the little society in their "own room, and exhorted them to walk worthy of their high calling." He closed the day with this record: "This was the first Sabbath I spent in America and it was truly a delight. My soul was abundantly blessed in preaching the word of life to others, and seemed perfectly willing to sacrifice everything for their good."

In a letter to Mr. Wesley, written two days later, namely, October 31, 1769, he states that the number of his hearers on the common was four or five thousand. In the same

epistle he also says the society in Philadelphia comprised about one hundred persons who desired to be in close connection with Wesley. The day before he wrote this letter he notes in his Journal that he preached "at five o'clock in the morning." In the letter to Mr. Wesley the next day he says: "When I began to talk of preaching at five in the morning the people thought it would not answer in America. However, I resolved to try and I had a very good congregation. There seems to be a great and effectual door open in this country and I hope many souls will be gathered in. The people in general like to hear the word, and seem to have ideas of salvation by grace."

On the Monday evening following his first Sabbath in the city, the room in which the Philadelphia society worshipped was "well crowded and God gave his blessing to the word." After the public meeting concluded, "I spoke," says Pilmoor, "with several persons who have a work of grace in their souls, and are panting after the liberty of the Sons of God. In America as well as in England there are witnesses of free salvation who have their part in the first resurrection and are partakers of vital religion."

On his way from New York to Maryland Robert Williams called upon Mr. Pilmoor in Philadelphia and joined him in the work of the ministry there. "During his stay in the city," says Pilmoor, "he preached several times and seemed to have a real desire to do good. His gifts are but small, yet he may be useful to the country people, who are, in general, like sheep without shepherds." The fact of Williams starting for Maryland almost immediately after Boardman's arrival in New York suggests that the latter sent him to reinforce Strawbridge southward.

Captain Webb was in Philadelphia on November 4, 1769, having come up from Wilmington, where he had been on a brief visit. He brought joyful tidings of men turned "from darkness into light." Thus, both Webb and Williams must have been with Pilmoor at this time. The next day was the second Sunday of Pilmoor's ministry in Philadelphia. At seven in the morning Webb preached "an excellent sermon

on poverty of spirit." Then a blessed time was enjoyed at St. Paul's at the sacrament. "My soul," says Pilmoor, "did eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood and found it meat indeed." As on the previous Sunday he preached from the stage of the race-course, so now he signalized the second Sunday of his mission by preaching in the public market. Of this occasion he wrote: "At two o'clock I preached to some thousands of people in the new Market, who all behaved as if they felt the awful presence of God." He had another service at six, at which he "read and explained the Rules of the Society to a vast multitude of serious people," and was much cheered by the encouraging aspect of the field. He exultingly says: "God has opened a great and effectual door in this place for the preaching of his gospel. Of all that I have seen in England and Wales, where I have travelled, nothing was equal to this. The word runs from heart to heart and from house to house in such a manner that I am filled with wonder and with praise."

Robert Williams was yet in the city, and November 6, 1769, "after preaching at five in the morning," Pilmoor, writes "Mr. Williams set off to Maryland. As he is very sincere and zealous I trust that God will make him a burning and a shining light in that dark part of the country, where the poor people have been so long neglected that they are quite ignorant of the gospel way of salvation."

Pilmoor, as these words show, knew something of the condition of things in Maryland already, and they afford corroboration of his suggestion of Webb's connection with the beginning of the work in that province. When he got as far south as Wilmington, the enthusiastic soldier evangelist would be apt to go further, especially if he heard of Strawbridge's work. And if he had joined Strawbridge in his southern labors he probably would have related the fact to Pilmoor. Apparently as we shall in a moment see this was the case.

The Philadelphia newspapers of the period show that business intercourse was established between it and Western Maryland. Most of the commerce of the middle colonies

south of the Hudson centred in Philadelphia. The communication between it and Maryland, occasioned by the business conditions of the country, rendered it almost inevitable that the first Wesleyan pioneers should also pass back and forth between that province and Philadelphia, and this they actually did.

Stevens, in the first volume of his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church" (p. 103), erroneously asserts that Williams joined King as well as Strawbridge "southward." In truth, King was never in America until nine months after Robert Williams went to Maryland.

Almost simultaneously with the reinforcement of Embury and Webb in New York and Philadelphia, by Wesley's first duly sent missionaries, Strawbridge in Maryland was reinforced by a valiant knight of the Cross, who arrived from Europe a few weeks before them. There is now a strong advance movement. With Boardman, Pilmoor, Webb, and Embury in the cities, and with Strawbridge and Williams in Maryland, the promise of wider and richer conquests brightens and strengthens. Edward Evans, too, is about to put on the Wesleyan armor and with the trump of the new evangel sound the battle signal in New Jersey. Altogether, in the closing weeks of the year 1769 the skies were radiant with hope and auguries of victory for the young Methodism of America.

At this time the work was spreading in Delaware and in Maryland. Pilmoor, on November 4, 1769, says: "Captain Webb came on from Wilmington and brought us tidings that Jesus the great Shepherd had blessed his labors in the gospel and made them successful in turning men from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. The work of God begun by him and Mr. Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, soon spread through the greater part of Baltimore County, and several hundreds of people were brought to repentance and turned unto the Lord." In 1791 Freeborn Garrettson published his "Experience and Travels," in which volume he says: "Between the seventeenth and eighteenth years of my age I left school. About this time

it was that there began to be much said of the people called Methodists in Baltimore County, where I lived." As he was seventeen years old August 15, 1769, it would appear that about the latter part of the same year the Methodist revival excited much attention in Baltimore County. It is apparent from what Pilmoor above says, that it was extending there in 1769, and he strongly intimates that Webb had given impulse to it. Garrettson says: "Many went out to hear them, and I among the rest. The place was so crowded I could not get into the house, but from what I could understand I thought they preached the truth, and did by no means dare to join with the multitude in persecuting them, but thought I would let them alone and keep close to my own church. One day as I was riding home I met a young man who had been hearing the Methodists and had got his heart touched under the word. He stopped me in the road and began to talk so sweetly about Jesus and his people, and recommended Him to me in such a winning manner, that I was deeply convinced there was a reality in that religion, and that it was time for me to think seriously on the matter." * Garrettson, however, did not become a Methodist, until some years subsequently. Yet, in this passage, he gives a vivid glimpse of the movement in Maryland about 1769-70. Lednum says that not many years before 1859 persons were living who heard Captain Webb preach in the woods in the north end of Wilmington.

Williams, as we have seen, preached in Philadelphia at five o'clock in the morning, November 6, 1769, and then started for Maryland. The same evening Pilmoor preached to a large congregation from a very assuring text, namely: "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Lord whom ye delight in, behold he shall come." He met a small company of people after the service and "spoke to them about the state of their souls. One of them lived as a servant with a family of rigid predestinarians, who had taken much pains to keep her from hearing the Methodists. But she told them the Methodists showed her the

* The Experience and Travels of Freeborn Garrettson, pp. 13, 14.

way to heaven by faith in Christ Jesus, and if they could point out a better way she would never go to hear them more. This put them to a stand ; so she resolved to go forward in that way wherein she had found benefit to her soul."

Those days early in November, 1769, were rich in experience, work, and success in the city of Brotherly Love. Indeed a revival was already in progress. "The Lord," says Pilmoor, "was remarkably present at our public meetings during the whole of this week"—November 5th and 11th inclusive. "I generally preach twice a day," he continues, "besides meeting classes and conversing with people about the state of their souls. Nine persons were admitted into society and one found peace with God. The Lord is making bare his arm in the sight of the heathen and many of the poor Africans are obedient to the faith. On Saturday night the people crowded into the room as long as they could and many were obliged to stand without in the street while I explained and applied the words of the Baptist: 'Whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.'"

Following this preaching service was held what would perhaps now be termed an "after-meeting." It was composed of the young people, "one of whom was deeply affected and groaned for redemption through the blood of the Lamb." Captain Webb was with them, "and he was greatly drawn out in prayer to God" for the conversion of the mourner. To all this Pilmoor was not indifferent. "As I sat in my room," he says, "my mind was impressed with a strong desire to go down and join with them. I did so, and it was indeed a time of great life and power. The poor creatures cried out in the bitterness of their souls for an interest in the blood of atonement and would not rest without a blessing from God. I stood and wondered at the amazing goodness of God, that he should condescend to work by such an unworthy instrument." Such an outbreak of revival was inspiring to the new missionary, and he exulted in witnessing its victorious progress.

Webb still stands with Pilmoor in the front of the battle in Philadelphia, as he had stood by Embury in New York. The third Sunday of Pilmoor's labors in Philadelphia, which was November 12th, was a day of remarkable interest. "God blessed the labors of Mr. Webb," writes Pilmoor, "and made his word in the mouth of his servant spirit and life to the people. In the evening a great number attended while I explained and applied his holy word. They hear as for their lives. Many that could not possibly squeeze into the house stood without and waited all the time, notwithstanding the cold. At the general society the house was quite full. The people are so in earnest for the word that there is no getting them away. Many come to me daily to inquire after the way of salvation, and are determined not to rest without the peace of God. The dear Immanuel is exalted and my soul exults in his salvation."

While the revival was thus advancing under the fervid and eloquent ministrations of Pilmoor, reinforced as he had been by those sons of thunder Thomas Webb and Robert Williams, he was moved by the spiritual destitution of the criminals in duress in Philadelphia to bear to them the divine message. Accordingly on November 14, 1769, after his sermon at 5 in the morning, he "went to the jail and preached to the poor sinners in that place of misery and distress."

In its primitive period in America Methodism was distinguished by its proclamation of the gospel to the profligate and the poor. I have shown that in the initial stage of his New York ministry, Embury located his pulpit in a notoriously vicious section of the city and also sought out the helpless victims of poverty in the poor-house; so now, before the lapse of a month after Wesley's missionaries first uplifted the evangelical standard in this country, one of them was in the Philadelphia jail, "proclaiming liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that were bound." The prisoners, "all behaved with the utmost attention. The word seemed to sink into their hearts and evidence itself to their consciences as the truth of God." The

Wesleyan movement, by its very genius, was a glad evangel to the wretched and the outcast. Like Him whom it exalted Methodism went to them that were lost. Its most brilliant successes have been achieved when it has most closely adhered to its original spirit and purpose.

Pilmoor's fourth Sunday in Philadelphia was, he says "a day of salvation. Both in the morning and in the evening God gave his blessing to the word and made it to work effectually in the hearts of the people." Nor did he intermit his work when the sabbath was over. He was at the head of the reapers in the ripe harvest and was constantly busy, "bringing in the sheaves." "The three following days," he writes, "I had many blessed opportunities of preaching Christ Jesus the Lord, and my poor labors were owned, especially among the prisoners. My soul is so drawn out with love to souls that I am willing to spend my very life in doing them good. Some ministers who preach for the sake of worldly advantage are careful to avoid too much duty, but I find duty is my delight and the more I preach the better I like the employment."

Up to this time the Philadelphia Methodists had no house of worship. In the early days of the society, which I suppose included the first weeks that Pilmoor was with them, they met "in a pothouse in Loxley's Court, which was a passage running from Arch to Cherry Street near Fourth."* The place was much too small for the accommodation of the people that gathered to hear the eloquent Wesleyan preacher who had now completed the first month of his mission in the city. He and his valiant band were embarrassed by their success. Provision had to be made for the growing auditories. Thursday, November 23, 1769, "we met," says Pilmoor, "to consult about getting a more convenient place to preach in. That we had would not contain half of the people who wished to hear the word, and the winter was approaching so that they could not stand without. Several places were mentioned and application was made to no purpose. Though the ministers in general were pretty quiet

* Watson's Annals of Philadelphia.

they did not approve of our preaching in their pulpits. In this I could not blame them, especially as we form a society of our own distinct from them and their congregations. What we should do I could not determine. Ground to build upon might have been easily purchased, but we had no money, and besides we wanted the place immediately."

A singular conjuncture of circumstances made it possible for Pilmoor and the society to purchase a church edifice which its projectors had not been able to finish nor to keep. This opportunity issued in a happy relief of the straitened Methodists. "We came to an agreement," says the missionary, "to purchase a very large shell of a church that was built by the Dutch Presbyterians and left unfinished for want of money. As the poor people had ruined themselves and their families by building it they were obliged to sell it to pay their creditors. It was put up at public auction and sold for seven hundred pounds, though it cost more than two thousand." Thus a new temple, of ample proportions, was prepared for the Methodist congregation of Philadelphia most opportunely, grievous as was the calamity of which its walls were the pathetic memorial. "The church," says Pilmoor, "was built to support a party. They spent their fortunes and were thrown into jail for debt. The church was appointed to be sold by an act of the Assembly. A gentleman's son who was *non compos mentis* happened to step into the auction room and bought it. His father wanted to be off of the bargain, but could not without proving the insanity of his son. Rather than attempt this, he was willing to lose fifty pounds by the job. Thus the Lord provided for us. Our way was made plain and we resolved to purchase the place, which we did for six hundred and fifty pounds. How wonderful the dispensations of Providence! Surely the very hairs of our heads are numbered." In the first volume of his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church" (see pages 66 and 120) Stevens says the church in Philadelphia was procured in 1770. We now know it was bought by the Methodist Society in 1769. As we shall hereafter see,

however, the regular legal conveyance of the property was not completed until June of the next year.

The new edifice, afterward known as Saint George's, was eighty-five feet long and fifty-five feet wide. The persons who built it, says Lednum, "we have been informed, were or had been members of the German Reformed congregation at the corner of Fourth and Sassafras Street." He also relates a tradition of the bankrupt projectors of the structure being in prison for debt and when "their acquaintances inquired of them as they looked through the prison windows, 'For what were you put in jail?' they answered, 'for building a church.' To go to jail for the pious deed of building a church became a proverb in the city of Brotherly Love."

The society, led by their ardent preacher, moved very rapidly in securing the building. They met to consult "about getting a more convenient place to preach in on the twenty-third of November" and the next day they gathered for worship in the new temple. This was Friday, thought by the superstitious to be an unlucky day. John Wesley has declared that the religion of the Methodists is "no more pure from heresy than it is from superstition." Those brave pioneers of the Wesleyan movement which was destined to overspread North America were not hindered by an idle superstition. Therefore on *Friday*, November 24, 1760, the standard of Christ was uplifted within the bare walls of the church on Fourth Street, which has ever since been a conspicuous fortress of Methodism. This notable occasion was well improved by Pilmoor, who says, "I preached in the new church to a numerous congregation with great freedom of mind. God gave me liberty of spirit to open that noble passage of scripture: 'Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring the head-stone thereof with shouting, crying, Grace, Grace, unto it.' Peradventure that God who enabled him to finish the temple at Jerusalem, will by his providence and blessing make way for us to finish the church we have bought and set apart for his praise." The next day Pilmoor again preached from the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee.

CHAPTER IV.

PILMOOR'S FIRST TERM IN ST. GEORGE'S, PHILADELPHIA ; ASSIST- ED BY WEBB AND STRAWBRIDGE.

IN the preceding chapter was described the successful endeavor of the Methodists in Philadelphia to procure a house of worship. We have seen them assembling within it, and now we come to witness their first sabbath convocation therein.

It was the twenty-sixth of November, 1769. A multitude thronged within the spacious walls of St. George's on that eventful day. Captain Webb, the founder of the society, appropriately preached the morning sermon. "God was present," writes Pilmoor, "and gave his blessing to the ministry of Mr. Webb. In the evening we had about two thousand hearers who waited with attention still as night, while I opened and applied the parable of the talents. After preaching I made a collection toward paying for the church, and got above sixteen pounds. This is a blessing from the Lord and I trust it will redound to his glory. Very many attended at the public society, a great concern seemed to be among them, and nothing will satisfy them but the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins." This vivid description of the work of the first sabbath in the new church strikingly recalls the impressive scenes of the memorable day.

Mechanics were at once engaged to adapt the building to the holy use to which it had been consecrated. While it was under the hands of the workmen, the improvement of the spiritual temple advanced. The days immediately succeeding the Sunday we have just contemplated were busy ones in the new edifice. "During the rest of this week," says Pilmoor, "we had good congregations in general ; the Lord

was present in our meetings, and gave his word success. My time was fully taken up—in the day with the workmen we had employed to make alterations in the church; in the evening preaching the everlasting gospel.”

St. George's has been called the Methodist Cathedral. For many years it was the largest Wesleyan structure in the land. It was occupied by the Philadelphia society in but little over a year after the opening of the New York chapel. There is ground for the belief that it was the second house of worship owned by the Methodists in this country. It is the only existing church of the denomination that was built before the outbreak of the Revolution. The original “preaching house” in New York was demolished in 1817, but that in Philadelphia, which first resounded with the voice of Joseph Pilmoor on the twenty-fourth of November, 1769, is yet a Wesleyan temple. In the revolutionary war it was desecrated by British troops, who used it for a riding-school. Its walls were somewhat mutilated by a fire which threatened its destruction in 1865, but the breaches made by the flames were mended, and St. George's stands the most conspicuous and impressive architectural memorial of American Methodist antiquity. Except three to four years it has stood throughout the whole period of the existence of Methodism in America. Unless ravaged by fire or shattered by earthquake, it probably will remain through the twentieth century monumental of a heroic and glorious epoch of Christian propagandism. Its beneficent influence has reached to the four quarters of the earth. In that sacred fabric are enshrined the faith, tears, and work of Thomas Webb, Joseph Pilmoor, Richard Boardman, Edward Evans, and their coadjutors and successors, and from its altars have gone forth thousands of converts who “have fought the good fight,” and have triumphantly swept through the gates of solid pearl into the City of pure Gold.

The second Sunday the Methodists of Philadelphia spent in their new sanctuary was a day of extraordinary significance. It was the first Sunday of December, 1769. The sermon in the morning was preached by Captain Webb,

and it "was attended with power." In the evening Pilmoor preached to a crowded assembly on the final judgment. The deportment of the people was consonant with the solemnity of the theme. The citizens of Philadelphia generally were impressed favorably by the new movement, for the fervent preacher declares: "The people in general behave to us with the utmost respect and civility, not only in the church while we worship Jehovah, but in all other places. This is the Lord's doing and justly demands our heartiest praises."

That which gave peculiar distinction to this second sabbath in St. George's was a declaration by Pilmoor of the "faith and body of principles" of the Methodists. Scarcely more than forty days had passed since the first itinerant deputation of Wesley arrived from London. Less than four years previously Barbara Heck thrust Philip Embury forth upon his gospel mission in New York. Robert Strawbridge had not long been sounding the trump of the new awakening in Maryland. Only a year or two had elapsed since Captain Webb began his fruitful evangelical labors in Philadelphia. Methodism was a novelty to the people, and its progress excited interest and inquiry. It was liable to suffer from misapprehension and misrepresentation. Now that it had come into a conspicuous position in Philadelphia by the occupancy of a church whose calamitous history, together with its prominent situation, made it an object of note, Pilmoor wisely determined that the people should be informed concerning the nature and design of Methodism, and of the purpose contemplated by the mission of his associate and himself in this country. In his Journal, he says:

"As I would not wish to do anything that would not bear the light, nor even mislead nor impose upon people, I resolved to lay before the congregation the only design we had in coming to America, and the reason of our buying the church; that they might be able to judge for themselves whether they ought to encourage us or not. Accordingly I read in public the following particulars:

"1. That the Methodist society was never designed to

make a separation from the Church of England, or to be looked upon as a Church.

“2. That it was at first and is still intended for the benefit of all those of every denomination, who being truly convinced of sin and the danger they are exposed to, earnestly desire to flee from the wrath to come.

“3. That any person who is so convinced, and desires admittance into the society, will readily be received as a *probationer*.

“4. That those who walk according to the oracles of God, and thereby give proof of their sincerity, will readily be admitted into full connection with the Methodists.

“5. That if any person or persons in the society walk disorderly and transgress the holy law of God, we will admonish him of his error; we will strive to restore him in the spirit of meekness; we will bear with him for a time; but if he remain incorrigible and impenitent, we must then of necessity inform him that he is no longer a member of the society.

“6. That the church now purchased is for the use of the society for the public worship of Almighty God.

“7. That a subscription will immediately be set on foot to defray the debt upon the said church, and an exact account kept of all the benefactions for that purpose.

“8. That the deeds of settlement shall be made as soon as convenient exactly according to the plan of the settlement of all the Methodist chapels in England, Scotland and Ireland.

“I then told the people we left our native land, not with a design to make divisions among them, or to promote a schism, but to gather together in one the people of God that are scattered abroad, and revive *spiritual religion*. This is our one point; Christ who died for us to live in us and reign over us in all things.”

This declaration furnished a just view of the Wesleyan platform. Mr. Wesley did not intend that his societies should be separated from the Church of England. His utterances

herein were positive and emphatic. He loyally adhered to the church and counselled his followers so to do. They were simply joined into societies under the quasi tutelage of the Church of England.

In his "Reasons for not Separating from the Church," Wesley said that the chief design of God's "providence in sending us out is undoubtedly to quicken our brethren. And the first message of all our preachers is to the lost sheep of the Church of England. Now would it not be a flat contradiction of this design to separate from the Church? It has been objected that till we do separate we cannot be a compact, united body. It is true we cannot till then be a compact, united body, if you mean by that expression, a body distinct from all others; and we have no desire to be so."

The Wesleys originally "had no plan at all. They only went hither and thither wherever they had a prospect of saving souls from death. But when more and more asked 'What must I do to be saved?' they were desired to meet all together. Twelve came the first Thursday night; forty the next; soon after a hundred. And they continued to increase." *

When the number of those who came together reached about a hundred Wesley "took down their names and places of abode, intending as often as it was convenient to call upon them at their own houses. Thus without any previous plan or design began the Methodist society in England; a company of people associating together to help each other to work out their own salvation."† Mr. Wesley also says that "it was one of our original rules that every member of our society should attend the Church and Sacrament, unless he had been bred among Christians of any other denomination."‡ The early American Methodists adhered to the rule concerning attendance upon the sacrament at the Episcopal Church.

Respecting the adherence of the Methodists to the English Church Mr. Wesley uttered the following explicit words: "The Methodists (so termed) know their calling. They weighed the matter at first and determined to continue in the

* Wesley's Sermons, vol. ii., p. 391.

† Ibid., p. 493.

‡ Ibid., p. 369.

Church. Since that time they have not wanted temptations of every kind to alter their resolution. They have heard abundance said upon the subject, perhaps all that can be said. They have read the writings of the most eminent pleaders for separation, both in the last and the present century. They have spent several days in a general Conference upon this very question, ‘Is it *expedient* (supposing, not granting, that it is *lawful*) to separate from the established Church?’ But still they could see no sufficient cause to depart from their first resolution. So that their fixed purpose is, let the clergy use them well or ill, by the grace of God to endure all things, to hold on their even course, and to continue in the Church, maugre men or devils, unless God permits them to be thrust out.”* The Wesleyan Conference in Bristol in 1768 bore the following testimony on this subject, which is on record in the minutes thereof: “Let us keep to the Church. Over and above all the reasons that were formerly given for this we add another, now from long experience. They that leave the church leave the Methodists. The clergy cannot separate us from our brethren, the dissenting ministers can and do. Therefore carefully avoid whatever has a tendency to separate men from the Church. In particular preaching at any hour that hinders them from going to it.”

In relation to a possibility of its being said that God could have made the Methodists “a separate people like the Moravian brethren,” Mr. Wesley asserts that “this would have been a direct contradiction to His whole design in raising them up; namely, to spread scriptural religion throughout the land, among people of every denomination, leaving every one to hold his own opinions and to follow his own mode of worship.” Furthermore he says: “Nothing can be more simple, nothing more rational than the Methodist discipline. It is entirely founded on common sense, particularly applying the general rules of scripture. Any person determined to save his soul, may be united (this is the only condition required) with them. But this desire must be evidenced by three marks: avoiding all known sin; doing

* Wesley’s Sermons, vol. i., pp. 496-97.

good after his power ; and attending all the ordinances of God." *

Charles Wesley was thoroughly loyal to the Church of England and as firmly opposed to the separation from it of the Methodists as his brother. In a letter, dated April 28, 1785, to Dr. Chandler, a New Jersey clergyman who spent some years in England, Charles said of himself and his brother John : " We had no plan but to serve God and the Church of England. My brother drew up rules for our society, one of which was constantly to attend the Church prayers and sacrament. When we were no longer permitted to preach in the Churches, we preached (but never in Church hours) in houses or fields and sent from thence, or rather carried, multitudes to Church who had never been there before. Our society in most places made the bulk of the congregation both at prayers and sacrament.

" I never lost my dread of a separation, or ceased to guard our society against it. I told them, ' I am your servant as long as you remain members of the Church of England, but no longer. Should you ever forsake her you renounce me.' Some of our lay preachers very early discovered an inclination to separate which induced my brother to publish *Reasons against Separation*. If any one did leave the Church at the same time he left our society. For fifty years we kept the sheep in the fold."

It is apparent then that Pilmoor's exposition of the place and purpose of Methodism in America correctly represented the plan of the Wesleys. He embodied in a succinct summary the essential ideas of Wesleyanism. Man a sinner, and as such in danger of the wrath to come ; Christ's substitutional death ; His kingship in the believer ; the word of God the rule of human conduct ; and the necessity of obedience to the divine law ; all of these truths were indicated in the historic declaration made by Joseph Pilmoor in St. George's, Philadelphia, December 3, 1769. The Wesleyan banner was now publicly upborne in the Quaker city, and the inhabitants were apprised of its significance.

* Wesley's Sermons, vol. ii., p. 392.

The next day, December 4, 1769, many persons spoke with the missionary on sacred themes. One was a man from the country. "In our conversation," says Pilmoor, "I happened to mention the Rev. John Wesley. 'O,' said he, 'I don't like him.'

"'Why so?'

"'He preaches works too much.'

"'That is hardly possible, provided they are presented as the fruits of faith, for by them a true faith is as evidently known as a tree by the fruit.'"

An example of the doctrine which Pilmoor proclaimed from the Wesleyan pulpit in Philadelphia is shown in the following reference to the sermon he delivered on the first Sunday evening in January, 1770. "I preached," he writes, "to a prodigious multitude on Abraham offering up Isaac, and found my soul exceedingly happy in speaking to the people of God on imitating the patriarch, and giving up all unto God. How wonderful is the power of obedient love! It makes the service of God a perfect freedom and every duty delightfully pleasant to the saints. When we consider the faith and love of Abraham, the severe trials with which he was exercised, and the glorious victory he obtained, we cannot but admire the infinite riches of grace, and that divine power by which he overcame. But when we view the amazing love of God to mankind, and see him deliver his darling son who was infinitely dearer to Him than all the angels in Heaven to suffering and shame and pain and death for a guilty world, 'tis beyond the power of expression and far exceeds the utmost stretch of human conception. Hear it ye flaming Seraphim, and all ye hosts of angels that adore around his lofty throne, 'God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life.'"

It is evident that Pilmoor maintained clearly and eloquently in America the chief doctrine of the Reformation, and of the Wesleys, namely, the justification of the repentant sinner by faith. He proclaimed Jesus in his atoning death

and mediation as the only hope of sinful men. The theme of his ministry was "Christ crucified."

The foundations of the great Wesleyan structure in America which were laid by humble lay hands before the arrival of Pilmoor and Boardman, were by their labors enlarged and strengthened. They were not incapable hirelings, but able ministers of the New Testament. We have less knowledge of Boardman than of his associate, yet we know enough to warrant the belief that he was "a faithful minister of Christ." In one of his autograph letters written in New York to Mrs. Thorn, of Philadelphia, he says: "I find it good to plow and sow in hope. The time for gathering in will come. O my dear friend, did we but see the fulness of blessing laid up for us in Christ Jesus it would make us strong in faith, earnest in prayer, satisfy our objections and supply all our wants, while out of this fulness we received grace for grace. Yet a little while and Jesus will take us home. May we get fully ready. Heaven will more than compensate for all the little difficulties and trials we have suffered in this world." It is easy to discern in these words—which reveal what spirit he was of—what was Boardman's view of Christianity, and of Christ its centre and substance. He preached him in the fulness of his redemptive character and office, as the Saviour to the uttermost of them that believe.

In another autograph letter written to Captain Parker, Boardman says: "No peace, no comfort, no security out of God. O to give Him all our hearts is indeed the one thing needful. God is indeed a jealous God and won't be robbed of his glory. Christ is worthy of our supreme love and service and praise. If we forsake him but in affection he will visit us with stripes. How many? How long will it last? This who can tell? How much has our gracious Redeemer to bear and suffer with us? He is God. He is Love, infinite in compassion. Let us therefore give him our love, our service, our hearts. Much prayer I am sure will do us much good, and will not be labor lost. We have an Advocate. Him the Father heareth always."

Pilmoor and Boardman obviously were fully grounded and

settled in the evangelical truths which have been firmly maintained and boldly proclaimed by the Wesleyans from the beginning. On Trinity Sunday, 1770, the former preached in New York, "on the grace and goodness of the divine Elohim, as engaged for our salvation," and to his reference to the occasion he adds :

"The Deity triune, one Being we name
Three persons divine forever the same
One absolute nature in all we maintain
One gracious preserver of angels and men."

They stood upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles.

The day following the Sunday when Pilmoor elucidated Methodism in St. George's was notable. In the evening he preached on "that glorious passage in the eighth of Romans: 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,'" and says: "I afterward admitted a very hopeful young man into the society and concluded the day in praise to God for the great and effectual door he has opened in this city for the preaching of his precious gospel. The sacred fire is spreading wider and wider, and the prospect continually grows brighter and brighter."

Pilmoor held a meeting on Friday, December 8, 1769, which he called "our first Intercession." It was a special service of the early Methodists, and he says that he regularly held it in both Philadelphia and New York. It is probable that Boardman did the same, as the last meeting he ever attended was the Intercession, in Cork, Ireland, on the last day of his life. Crook informs us that the Intercession was "a special prayer-meeting held on Friday, at noon, in Cork, at that time with reference to the revival and progress of religion and the labors of the coming Sabbath." This meeting was held at noon on Friday by Pilmoor in this country. He records his testimony to its usefulness. Of the first Intercession he held in Philadelphia he says: "It was indeed a time of love." Immediately he adds: "Since my arrival in this country my mind has been greatly drawn out in prayer, and God gives me an answer of peace." The weekly Intercession

was no doubt one of the means by which the Wesleyans in America promoted the spirit and exercise of prayer and obtained strength for their conflicts and conquests.

Wherever the teachings of Jesus prevail, childhood receives tender nurture. At the period of his advent great cruelty was practised toward children in the Roman Empire. Even Cicero said, when a child "dies in the cradle no concern is felt about it." Children were often abandoned or destroyed by their parents, especially the female children. The Christian fathers refer to this Roman brutality. "Man is more cruel to his offspring than animals," says Clement. Felix speaks of the exposure of children to wild beasts. Christianity antagonized this as well as the other moral enormities of the classic civilization.

Christ showed a pathetic interest in children, and charged an apostle: "Feed my lambs." The care of childhood is a chief work of the Church. The Christian teacher who neglects the religious culture of the young fails to fulfil his mission fully. The ranks of the religionists that care for children will be reinforced by adults. Wordsworth truthfully says "the child is father of the man." The shaping which the mind and heart receive in the first decade of life will commonly remain through all the following years of youth and manhood. The prophet Elisha cast salt into the waters of Jericho, so that they were healed; and the Church through its ministry and its lay agencies ought to sweeten and purify the springs of the future race by instilling into childhood the holy principles of the gospel. Of this important work Joseph Pilmoor was not unmindful nor neglectful amid all his cares and labors in St. George's. With his engrossment of mind and time in procuring and fitting for use "a shell" of a large church, and the frequent public services, and private conversations incident to the enlarged and revived condition of the cause, he yet found opportunity to care for the children. On Saturday, December 9, 1769, at three o'clock, he held a children's service in Philadelphia. Of this occasion he says: "I met the children for the first time and found it much more difficult to speak to them than to preach to the most in-

telligent hearers." The next Saturday, December 16, he was again occupied with the children, and was cheered by signs of success in this hopeful department of his charge. Of this meeting he says : "I met with some encouragement. Several of the dear little creatures wept when I spoke with them of the things of God. Perhaps some of these may be followers of Jesus when my head is laid in the dust."

Wesley enjoined attention to this Juvenile work. At his conference in 1768 at which the American call for preachers was first presented, it was asked "What can be done for the *rising generation*? Unless we can take care of these the present revival of religion will be *res unius Ætatis*. It will last only the age of a man. Who will labor here? Let him that is zealous for God and the souls of men begin now. 1. Spend an hour a week with the children in every large town, whether you like it or not. 2. Talk with them every time you see any at home. 3. Pray earnestly for them."*

We have seen that an important place was filled by Thomas Webb in the initiatory stage of the movement in America. He served it by his counsels, travels, preaching, and pecuniary contributions. We have also seen that he was its founder in Philadelphia, and during the first period of Pilmoor's labors in that city Webb was much with him. He was there when the congregations were overflowing their humble place of worship in the first weeks of Pilmoor's American ministry. He was also with them and preached on the first Sunday that they assembled in the new church. No doubt he encouraged and assisted them in effecting their removal to it. Four Sundays of the five from November 5 to December 3, 1769, inclusive, he was present and preached in Philadelphia, and he evidently was an important agent in promoting the revival then in progress. Being about to leave the city for his home on Long Island he preached a farewell sermon on the evening of the ninth of December. Pilmoor, in speaking of this occasion, thus describes the famous military evangelist : "His preaching, though incorrect and irreg-

* Minutes of the Wesleyan Conferences from the First held in London. By the late Rev. John Wesley, vol. i., pp. 81, 82.

ular, is attended with wonderful power, and many are greatly blessed under his ministry. He has the great seal of God's approbation to his commission, and that is far more than all the human authority under heaven."

The third sabbath in the new church—December 10, 1769—was a good day for the advancing cause. The meeting in the morning was profitable. In the afternoon Pilmoor attended worship in one of the Presbyterian churches of the city, and reported that the sermon was most excellent, and that the blessing of God descended. In the evening he remarks: "Our church was well crowded while I preached on 'Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?' The general society afterward was attended with a great measure of the presence of God. The showers of his grace descended upon us; my soul was filled with love and pity for poor sinners, and greatly drawn out with desires for their salvation." The next day (Monday) he writes "was truly a gospel day. Many attentive hearers were present while I expatiated on the words of good King Hezekiah to his princes and people when Jerusalem was besieged by Sennacherib, King of Assyria, 'Be strong and courageous,' etc. We have no need to fear," he exclaims, "for there are more with us than can possibly be against us. God Himself is on our side, and therefore we shall do valiantly and put to flight the armies of aliens. Tuesday was all taken up in speaking with those who came to inquire how they may flee from the wrath to come, and preaching to the prisoners where I had more liberty than ever before."

Pilmoor in Philadelphia was surrounded by a serene and plain order of people, called Friends. Their habits of devout simplicity and serious quietness impressed the life of the city, and gave a tone to its social and religious atmosphere. Philadelphia was in a good degree at that time a Quaker city. The fervent Methodists and the tranquil Friends came into frequent contact. On the fourth Sunday of Pilmoor's ministry in St. George's, December 17, 1769, he preached at seven in the morning, and then went to the Quaker meeting. He says: "Three public Friends delivered their testimony,

but did not appear to have much of that spirit and life which so remarkably attended the primitive Quakers." We shall see that subsequently he was able to give a more favorable report of what he saw of this peculiar people in Philadelphia.

Diligently and ardently Pilmoor prosecuted his mission, and under his effective preaching the work advanced in Philadelphia. We have seen the revival fires extending, and as he approaches the Christmas-tide of 1769, he says: "The work is still spreading; souls are flocking to the standard of the gospel and putting on the armor of God." The crowd that gathered at five in the morning of Christmas was "vast," and they "heartily united in the high praises of the King of Zion. At ten I attended divine service," he says, "and received the Holy Sacrament at St. Paul's, and found much comfort to my soul. Our congregation in the evening was very large, and God gave me liberty of mind to preach Christ Jesus the Lord as the only Saviour of sinners. Nothing on earth affords me such satisfaction as striving to exalt my heavenly Master, and invite the people to come unto Him. Last Christmas I was in the Principality of Wales; now my lot is cast near four thousand miles off in North America."

Still the revival goes on. The day after Christmas Pilmoor had many persons speak with him about religion. "God is carrying on his work in a most wonderful manner," he declares. "He makes bare his arm in defence of his gospel, and makes it the savor of life unto life. Several persons who have been awakened of late desired admittance into the society. After examining them closely and finding them deeply serious I gave them leave to meet with us." The first day of the year 1770 he was greatly refreshed in speaking with many of the society after the service in the evening, and testified: "God is deepening his gracious work."

On the second day of 1770 he began an exposition of the Lord's Prayer in Philadelphia, which he continued several evenings. He says: "Many people attended, and God gave me much freedom of mind to preach his word." As we shall see he subsequently preached a lengthened series of discourses in New York on the same fruitful theme.

And now the famous Maryland evangelist appears in the midst of the Philadelphia awakening. Hitherto we have not met him on any defined date, but on Sunday, January 14, 1770, we behold him in St. George's pulpit proclaiming the message which he had delivered with such historic results south of the Susquehanna. We are not informed when he came to Philadelphia, how long he stayed, nor how extensively he labored there, nor when or whither he went, but Pilmoor does say that on this Lord's day "Mr. Robert Strawbridge, a local preacher from Maryland, gave us a plain, useful sermon at seven in the morning." Thus far did this Wesleyan apostle wander from the sunny land of the Chesapeake in the depth of winter, and join Pilmoor in evangelistic labor. Those primitive Methodist preachers were not appalled by distance nor difficulty, but in going forth weeping they travelled afar "bearing precious seed." Though the field was vast, the work was one, and the few laborers who promoted it rejoiced to share each other's toil. Although we have no knowledge as to where Strawbridge then appeared except Philadelphia, we cannot doubt that so valiant a soldier of the cross drew the sword of the Spirit in holy conflict elsewhere in the region of the Delaware during this mid-winter campaign. We have thought it possible that he even went to New York at this time to see his countryman, Embury, and rejoice with him on the field of his warfare and victory. This supposition is not unreasonable in view of the fact that Embury was then about to remove to Ashgrove.

Mr. Pilmoor, in his search for souls, got eight miles away from Philadelphia on the sixteenth of January, 1770, several Philadelphians going with him through the snow in a sleigh. "We found a large congregation waiting," he says, "and I began immediately to publish free salvation to sinners through the blood of the Lamb. God is raising up witnesses of his saving grace even in this place."

Pilmoor preached in the city in the morning of Sunday, January 21st, and then went with several of his friends to Kingcess, "where," he remarks, "the Swedes have lately built a handsome church. We had a fine congregation, and

God enabled me to preach his word with power, and made it a time of love. Bigotry has but little place in Pennsylvania," he adds. "As there is no established church, the different societies of Christians are all on a level, and in general love one another."

He was in St. George's pulpit in the evening of this, his ninth Sunday in that church. The congregation, he says, "was remarkably large and attentive. I preached on 'The great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?' My bodily strength was greatly exhausted, but God renewed it again in meeting the society."

The fame of his unctuous eloquence reached to a beneficent institution in Philadelphia, which was called the Bettering House. He learned that the inmates wished to hear him. He was quite ready to gratify them, and accordingly on Tuesday, January 23, 1770, he "preached in one of their work rooms to a great number of them." Of this retreat he wrote: "There are about three hundred persons in it who are well taken care of by the public. Those who are able are employed in some kind of work, the sick have proper attendance, and the children are properly instructed. This is a House of Mercy, and is a credit to Philadelphia."

The Pentecostal wind and flame still rushed on in the Quaker city. The beginning of February, 1770, was distinguished by remarkable manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The first day of that month "we had a special blessing," says Pilmoor, "while I preached on the conquest of David over Goliath. God gave us a good hope through grace that we shall overcome the devil and all that oppose us. During the rest of this week our public and private meetings were much owned and blessed of the Lord. He carries on his work both among the old and the young, but *chiefly* among the young people who seem determined to run the appointed race and never rest till they obtain the celestial prize."

Notwithstanding his engrossing labor in Philadelphia, he went abroad to sow the fruitful seed of the Wesleyan revival. The extent of his work outside of the city is indicated in his record for January, 1770. "In the course of this month," he

writes, "I preached many times in the country as well as in the city, and found the Lord present with me in general. He enabled me to preach the word of his grace and made it effectual for the conversion and edification of immortal souls. There is a great and effectual door open for the gospel in America, and I trust neither earth nor hell will ever be able to shut it. If I were able to preach ten times a day here is work enough, and the people receive the word with thankfulness." As we shall see, it was charged two years later that Pilmoor and his colleague had remained in the cities too exclusively. It is evident, however, that Pilmoor at least was not remiss in labor at this time in either the city or country.

He went to a place twenty miles from the city on March 3, 1770, where he "found a fine congregation, and God gave his word success." It is almost certain that this place was Methacton. The following day, which was Sunday, he preached at White Marsh, and remarks: "It is an English Episcopal church, but there is no objection to my preaching in it as the principal members are my particular friends. As it had been published some time before, the people gathered from all quarters, so that the congregation was very large and my heart was quite at liberty while I showed the nature and properties of faith, and what that salvation is which is consequent on believing on the Son of God."

The village of White Marsh is in Montgomery County, Pa., fourteen miles from Philadelphia. The Episcopal church in that place was built of stone in Gothic architecture in 1710. Its spire rises 100 feet. "It was nearly one of the first Episcopal churches built in Pennsylvania."* After preaching there on this occasion Pilmoor returned to meet his city congregation. "In the afternoon the snow came down very plentifully," he says, "so that we had very disagreeable travelling; however we got home in time for me to preach in the evening. The Lord seemed to be remarkably present while I explained the parable of the prodigal son, and likewise at the society."

* Buck's History of Montgomery County, Norristown, 1859, pp. 66, 67.

Like the Divine Master whom he served Pilmoor fed the hungry. Hearing that the prisoners in the jail "were in the greatest distress for want of bread" he determined to relieve them. So in the evening of the fifteenth of March he preached "a charity sermon for them from the text, 'If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink, etc.' The people were remarkably generous and contributed freely to their necessities. As charities are often misapplied, I resolved," he says, "to see to the laying out of the money myself and bought them bread, and went to the jail to deliver it among them that I might be sure they got it."

The soldier evangelist was again in the city and at Pilmoor's side in the closing days of his first term on the Delaware. It was fortunate that Webb returned, for having taken cold Pilmoor was in his room sick, a result probably of his incessant labors. "I continued very ill on Saturday and Sunday," he writes, "but God had graciously provided by sending Captain Webb who preached for me and his ministry was blessed to the souls of the people." This was on the seventeenth and eighteenth of March. On Monday the nineteenth he "was better but very weak." An inquirer called in great distress to ascertain if he were dead. "It seems," he says, "that a report had spread through the city that I was dead which greatly affected and distressed the people."

The close of his work for a season in Philadelphia is at hand. A time of refreshing was enjoyed at the Intercession at noontide on Friday the twenty-third of March, 1770, and in the evening he held a service of especial interest and importance which in a moment he shall describe.

The love feast is a significant feature of the Wesleyan economy. In it the members partake of bread and water together in token of their brotherly love. The Methodists have esteemed it as one of their most joyful festivals. It gave to the old American quarterly meetings a peculiar and a pathetic charm. By personal recitals of Christian experience it evoked ejaculations and tears, mingled with songs and shoutings. It fostered and conserved that religious emotion which is so delightful to fervent disciples. In it blended the exultant voices

of veteran saints with the rapturous expressions of new converts. It rekindled failing ardor, stimulated faltering resolutions, and revived declining graces. Its attraction has been felt by millions, and its effects have been made manifest by the intensified zeal and joy of Methodists all over Protestant Christendom. The first love-feast that was held in America, at least in Philadelphia, was a really historical event. Joseph Pilmoor introduced this beautiful festival in the city of Brotherly Love amidst the vivid experiences of new Christians and the glowing spirituality of the society following upon a revival. On the above noted evening, March 23, 1770, "we had," he says, "our first American love-feast in Philadelphia and it was indeed a time of love. The people behaved with as much propriety and decorum as if they had been for many years acquainted with the economy of the Methodists."

It may be thought that as the Wesleyan movement was progressing in New York prior to its origin in Philadelphia that a love-feast had been held in the former city before the above date, but Pilmoor informs us that this was not the case. Wakeley in his "Lost Chapters" printed a ticket of membership issued to Hannah Dean, afterward the wife of Paul Hick, in New York, dated October 1, 1769, and signed by Robert Williams. This Wakeley calls a "love-feast ticket." Pilmoor, however, after going there from Philadelphia held a love-feast of which he said: "It is the first that has been kept by the Methodists of New York." This was nearly two months later than the first love-feast in Philadelphia. Therefore there is reason to believe that the latter was the first in America. Whether Strawbridge prior to this time had held a love-feast in Maryland it would now be vain to inquire, but it may safely be said that no evidence exists of such an event.

Captain Webb preached in Philadelphia on Saturday night, March 24, 1770, and also on the Sunday morning following. In the evening Pilmoor preached his "farewell sermon." The congregation was very large—"about two thousand attentive hearers," he asserts. After the sermon he met the society. "This," he says, "has been a good day. The

word of the Lord was quick and powerful and the people were greatly affected."

In closing his first term of ministerial labor in America he very naturally cast over it a retrospective eye and with deep interest studied the results. He saw much cause for joyful gratitude. He gives this *résumé* of his labors and of the fruit thereof: "I have now been five months in this city and the Lord has wonderfully condescended to work by me. I have preached in many places adjacent and the sacred fire is kindled. Many persons are deeply concerned for their salvation and gladly receive the gospel. If we had but more preachers—men of faith and prayer, who would preach Christ Jesus the Lord 'tis probable the American Methodists would soon equal if not exceed the Europeans.

"There are now one hundred and eighty-two in society to whom I have given tickets, and they meet in class and attend to all the discipline of the Methodists as well as the people in London or Bristol."

The happy results of his first period of toil in Philadelphia moved Pilmoor to exclaim, "This is God's own work. He has wonderfully made bare his arm in the sight of his people, and his right hand has gotten himself the victory. A seed is raised up to serve Him, and they shall be numbered to the Lord for a generation, and I hope many of them will be to *me* a crown of rejoicing in the day of His appearing."

When he opened his ministry in Philadelphia in the closing days of October, 1769, the society comprised about one hundred members and were without a church or any other adequate place of worship. They also were without means to buy or build one. Scarcely more than a month elapsed after his arrival before the large edifice which yet stands on Fourth Street was obtained, and occupied by the congregation which so soon overflowed the former room, which it is presumed was the "pot house" in Loxley's Court. The church so quickly acquired at once became the scene of great assemblies and of powerful occasions of preaching, prayer, and revival. It was not finished and its auditorium was by no means elegant. At a later period it was described by an

eye-witness as “without galleries within or railing without—a dreary cold-looking place in winter time when from the leaky stove-pipe mended with clay the smoke would frequently issue and fill the house. The front door was in the centre. About twenty feet from the east end inside stood a square thing not unlike a watch-box with the top sawed off which served as the pulpit.” *

The addition of this solid and spacious structure to the material equipment of Methodism in this country was a large achievement. It established the embryonic church on a firm and permanent basis in the foremost city of the continent and gave it prestige in the land. Altogether Pilmoor’s first period of ministry in Philadelphia was distinguished by signal and enduring success. In the brief period of five months he saw the membership of the society nearly doubled and the public ear opened to hear the word. In those months Methodism in Philadelphia attained to a vantage ground which it never relinquished nor lost, and which gave impetus to all the subsequent advances of the Methodists in the land. In accomplishing these remarkable achievements Pilmoor indeed received important assistance. Every Methodist preacher then in the country except Embury joined him in his responsible and laborious field. Captain Webb was frequently with him, and his service no doubt was important in procuring the Church building as well as in the enlargement of the spiritual temple. Boardman preached at the beginning, and a little later Williams delivered several of his arousing sermons. Robert Strawbridge also surveyed the new and strategic ground and proclaimed the glad tidings there. Yet these, Webb excepted, were but brief visitors. Pilmoor steadily stood at his post, guided the movement, was “instant in season out of season,” planned, preached, prayed, and prevailed. He led his brave battalion to strenuous warfare and to splendid victory.

* Watson’s *Annals of Philadelphia*, vol. i., p. 456. The “watch-box” was the shelter of the city watchman.

CHAPTER V.

BOARDMAN AND PILMOOR TOGETHER IN NEW YORK.

THROUGHOUT Pilmoor's first term in Philadelphia, Boardman was preaching in New York. On the twenty-sixth of March, 1770, Pilmoor left Philadelphia in a "chaise" with Francis Harris of that city, to exchange with Boardman. It was arranged that he should preach at Pennypack, and he was accompanied thither by many of his friends. There he preached to a large audience, and says: "The God of all grace was remarkably present and gave us a parting blessing. After preaching I formed a little society. At present there is a fair prospect here. If the preaching is kept up, it is likely that much good will be done."

He "set off early the next morning," and arrived in New York about eight o'clock on Wednesday evening, March 28, 1770. "Knowing it was preaching night, we hastened to the chapel," he says, "and found Mr. Boardman preaching the word of God with life and power. My heart greatly rejoiced at the sight of him, and my spirit was united in close fellowship with him. God has made us like David and Jonathan. Our souls are bound together in love."

Boardman and Pilmoor now performed an important and especial task for the society in John Street. Ground was purchased for a Methodist chapel two years before Pilmoor's arrival in New York. The structure was erected and opened for worship one year before Boardman saw it. The property, however, had not been legally secured to the society. The lots were bought by and conveyed to eight gentlemen. Pilmoor says there had "been great uneasiness among the people of this city about the settlement of the chapel that was built for the Methodists." Steps were now taken to re-

move this distrust and to establish the work upon a firm material foundation. Both of the missionaries being in New York, the trustees were called together by them and the writings examined. "By comparison with the plan on which the chapels in Europe are settled," says Pilmoor, "we found them to be essentially wrong. The trustees were invested with absolute power over both preachers and people, and could do just as they wanted without being accountable to anyone. This we judged to be not only contrary to the whole economy of the Methodists, but likely to prove hurtful to the work of God. Therefore we endeavored to persuade them to have it altered. The reasons we gave had such weight that the trustees freely resigned their trust, and agreed to destroy the writings, which was immediately done by the consent of the whole." As Philip Embury was one of the eight men to whom the property was conveyed, it would seem that at this time he had not removed from the city. "Afterward," writes Pilmoor, "a proper settlement was made according to the general plan, and the chapel was regularly settled."

The original deed of the John Street site, which was executed March 30, 1768, is yet preserved, and is in the possession of the trustees of the Eighteenth Street Methodist Episcopal Church of New York. Seaman printed it in an appendix to his "Annals of Methodism in New York City." The deed was made to Philip Embury, William Lupton, Charles White, Richard Sause, Henry Newton, Paul Heck, Thomas Taylor, all of New York City, and Thomas Webb, of Queens County. According to the terms of the instrument the property belonged to these gentlemen in fee simple. It appears that a lease of the same premises was given to the same persons the day preceding the date of the deed, that is to say, March 29, 1768.

Dr. Wakeley, in "Lost Chapters," says that the property was first leased to these persons, and that there was a space of "two years and seven months" between the date of the lease and the date of the deed. There was, it is true, such an interval between the date of the lease of which Wakeley

speaks, and the reconveyance of the property to which Pilmoor refers, when he says that afterward "the chapel was regularly settled." But there was an earlier deed unknown to Wakeley, which bore the date of the day following that on which the lease was given. It was this primitive deed to which Pilmoor refers when he says, "we examined the writings" and "found them to be essentially wrong." The writings were wrong because thereby the trustees were made possessors of the property and "could do just as they wanted, without being accountable to anyone." That Wakeley knew nothing of this deed is apparent from his statement that he discovered "on the old book that the price they ultimately paid for 'the John Street premises' was £600." * Had he seen the deed of March 30, 1768, he would have learned from it, as well as from the "Old Book," that the sum he mentions was the consideration of the purchase. That Wakeley was ignorant of the existence of this deed is also clear from a notable error which he recorded thus: "Our Methodist fathers were prudent men. They acted very cautiously. Not feeling able to purchase the site, they concluded that it was better to lease and pay the ground rent. This they did for nearly three years, and it was upon this leased property they built the renowned Wesley Chapel. I know this account differs from all we have read on the subject by writers on early Methodism in New York, but here are the documents that are on record; here are the well-authenticated facts." † There was one document, however, which disproved his alleged "facts." Stevens, in the first volume (page 63) of his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," advanced the same error in saying: "They leased the site on John Street in 1768 and purchased it in 1770." They *purchased* it in 1768, and in 1770 a new conveyance was effected, which absolutely secured it to the Methodists.

Why the purchasers of the John Street site took a lease thereof only one day before their deed was executed, probably is not known. If Wakeley had discovered this deed, he would not have said that "our early Methodist fathers,"

* Lost Chapters, p. 56.

† Ibid., pp. 55, 56.

being "prudent men," erected "upon this leased property" their chapel. The chapel was built by those "prudent men," not upon "leased" ground, but upon a site bought by and legally conveyed to the eight gentlemen whose names are above given. To secure the object of the purchase beyond all contingencies, the settlement of the chapel was regularly and legally made by a new deed, which was executed November second, 1770, and which conveyed the property in trust to: "Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, ministers of the gospel; William Lupton, merchant; Thomas Webb, gentleman; John Southwell, merchant; Henry Newton, shopkeeper; James Jarvis, hatter; all of the city of New York, trustees appointed for the uses and purposes hereinafter mentioned." Those purposes, as set forth in the deed, were, in brief, that John Wesley, late of Lincoln College, in the University of Oxford, and such other persons as he should "from time to time appoint," might "therein preach and expound God's Holy Word;" and after his decease, "Charles Wesley, late of Christ's Church College, Oxford, and such person or persons as he" should "from time to time appoint, and at all times during his life, and no other, to have and enjoy the full use and benefit of the said meeting-house for the purposes aforesaid;" and after his decease, "then upon further trust and confidence, the said Richard Boardman and the rest of the hereinbefore mentioned trustees, or the major part of them, or the survivors of them, and the major part of the trustees for the time being, shall, and from time to time thereafter will, permit such person or persons as shall be appointed at the yearly conference of the people called Methodists in London, Bristol, Leeds, and the city of New York; and no others, to have and enjoy the said premises for the purposes aforesaid, provided always that the said person or persons, so from time to time to be chosen as aforesaid, preach no other doctrine than is contained in the said John Wesley's 'Notes upon the New Testament,' and his four volumes of sermons."

It appears that while the chapel was not built upon leased ground, as Wakeley asserts, it stood upon a site

which, according to the terms of the deed, was owned by the eight persons who bought it. Therefore it was an important service which the two preachers rendered in effecting an arrangement which, on the second of November, 1770, perfectly secured the premises by a new deed to the society.

We now see what the first Methodist Church in New York cost. The original deed and the "Old Book" alike show that the price of the lots was six hundred pounds. Thomas Bell, who worked on the structure six days, in a letter dated May 13, 1769, says that the cost of the chapel was six hundred pounds.* Thus it seems that the cost of the edifice was the same as the cost of the site, and the total expense of the enterprise was twelve hundred pounds. The price paid for St. George's by the Philadelphia society was only six hundred and fifty, though Pilmoor says it originally cost two thousand pounds.

Boardman and Pilmoor remained together for some days in New York, "strengthening and encouraging each other to go forward in the good way and work of God." "We parted," says Pilmoor, "with a full determination to live or die for the Lord Jesus. Mr. Boardman set off with Mr. Harris in his chaise for Philadelphia, and I stayed in New York." Boardman's departure could not have been earlier than the tenth of April, 1770, as on that day, according to the "Old Book," he received from the John Street treasurer one pound and four shillings, "to pay his expenses to Philadelphia." Apparently St. George's was without either of the regular preachers for over a fortnight. But there is reason to suppose that during this interval one of the "irregulars" was doing effective work in that field. Pilmoor, on the day preceding that in which he left Philadelphia, mentioned that Captain Webb preached there. It is probable that he remained and manned the post until Boardman arrived.

New York, at the time of the coming of the Wesleyan missionaries, had not far from twenty thousand inhabitants. The growth of the city had been very slow. As early as

* Letter of Thomas Bell in *Arminian Magazine*, London, 1807, pp. 45, 46. I assume that Bell means that the building alone cost 600 pounds.

1613 the Dutch erected a few huts on Manhattan Island. When a century and more had passed, according to an old map, Frankfort Street, near the upper end of the City Hall Park, "was at about the northernmost limit of the loosely settled town, with farms and gardens and swamps beyond." At the opening of the revolution the city had less than 22,000 population, and not until 1815 did it reach one hundred thousand.

The condition of New York as to its ecclesiastical concerns is indicated by the catalogue of its churches, furnished by Thomas Bell. New York, in 1769, he asserts, had "three places of worship of the Church of England; two of the Church of Scotland; three of the Dutch Church; one Baptist meeting; one Moravian chapel; one Quakers' meeting; one Jews' synagogue, and one French Reformed Chapel." He adds: "Among all these there are very few that like the Methodists. The Dutch Calvinists have preached against them." The letter containing these statements was written nearly three months before Boardman and Pilmoor were appointed to America. In addition to the above places of religious convocation was the humble chapel on Golden Hill—John Street. There must also have been a Lutheran church or congregation in the city, as in an advertisement which Philip Embury inserted in a New York newspaper, in March, 1761, concerning a school he proposed to establish, he said the school house was "in Little Queen Street, next door to the Lutheran Minister's." Little Queen was what is now Cedar Street.

Bell does not mention any church of the Presbyterian name. That denomination, however, was in New York, and possibly Bell included the churches of that order under the appellation of the "Church of Scotland," of which he says there were two. The "Brick" Presbyterian Church, of which the eminent Gardiner Spring became pastor in 1810, was opened for worship the first of January, 1768. The first Baptist church in New York City began about 1745, "in occasional gatherings of Baptists for prayer and singing in private dwellings." It is interesting to note that these Bap-

tists hired "a rigging loft in Cart and Horse lane, a thoroughfare known to this generation as William Street," where they assembled. Whether it was the rigging loft in which the Methodists afterward worshipped in the same street is not determined. "A site for a church building was selected in 1759, on Golden Hill, near Fair Street. On the present maps this would be in Gold Street, near Fulton. The first Baptist meeting-house was built and opened for public worship, March 14, 1760." In the Revolution the British occupied this sanctuary as a stable for "the horses of their troopers." *

At that time New York was a slave city. Not only was there the domestic traffic in negroes, but the city was also a mart of the slave trade. This is shown by the following advertisement which appeared in Weyman's *New York Gazette*, of September 21, 1761.

A PARCEL OF CHOICE SLAVES

Just imported, to be sold on board a sloop at Cruger's Wharf.

The New York newspapers of the period illustrate the domestic traffic in slaves. The advertisement which follows was printed in *The New York Journal or General Advertiser* in January, 1770.

To be Sold for no Fault but Want of Cash.

A likely negro man and a wench fit for a farmer or any private family. Have both had small-pox and measles.

In the same newspaper, July 12, 1770, was this :

TO BE SOLD FOR NO FAULT.

A likely negro wench about eighteen years of age. Can be well recommended. Enquire of the printer.

Slaves were then sold in New York just as horses were sold, as is shown by the last advertisement illustrative of this business which I shall insert. It appeared in the same journal, March 29, 1770, the day after Pilmoor's first arrival in New York.

* Historic Churches, in the New York Mail and Express, May 6, 1893.

A NEGRO MAN TO BE SOLD.

Has been used to both town and country. He is a likely, sober fellow, and to be sold for no fault but want of employment. A stout, brown horse to be sold at same place. Inquire of the printer.

Methodism in America rose amid slavery. Boardman and Pilmoor encountered the institution, and preached to slaves. Not until many years afterward did the North adopt emancipation. Methodism met slavery in New York and in Philadelphia before any Wesleyan societies were formed south of the Potomac.

We are now to see Pilmoor laboring with zeal and success in his first pastoral term in the city which has become the vast capital of the western continent.

When, by the departure of Mr. Boardman for Philadelphia, the two preachers were again separated, Pilmoor wrote: "It would be a special favor if we could always live together in the same city, but the time is not yet. When a few years are past we shall meet in the New Jerusalem, and then we shall live to part no more forever."

In a strange town and among strangers, no doubt Pilmoor felt a degree of loneliness. It was but natural that he should long for the sight and the fellowship of his friend, Captain Webb, whose home was not far away. Not many days passed before Pilmoor arranged for a visit to the veteran soldier. "Having settled all my affairs in the city," he writes, "and being a little at liberty, on Thursday, the nineteenth of April, I crossed over to Long Island and rode with a friend to Jamaica to visit Captain Webb. Our souls were comforted together, and God made our meeting a time of refreshing from his Heavenly Presence. In the afternoon I preached, but was greatly straitened in mind. God withdrew the comfortable assistance I usually enjoy, and my mind was so embarrassed that I found it very hard work to preach. It is with me an easy matter to *talk*, but to *preach* is beyond my power unless assisted from above. In the evening I returned to the city, and was somewhat comforted in meeting the society. Friday and Saturday I had several

opportunities of speaking for God, and was greatly refreshed in my soul."

On Sunday the twenty-second of April, 1770, Pilmoor enjoyed good seasons with the New York Methodists. "In the evening," he says, "our congregation was very large and the Chief Shepherd was graciously pleased to give us his blessing of peace."

He spent some time the next day in reading the Old Testament in the original. This scholar of Wesley's Kingswood school had not forgotten his Hebrew. When he had been in America less than four weeks he wrote: "After expounding at five I began to resume the study of the *holy language*. My reason was a desire to be more extensively useful in the world, and to more effectually promote the glory of God. With a view to this I made a covenant with my God and promised to devote my all to his service. I desire to have wisdom for my portion and to dwell with the God of the Hebrews forever and ever." Now in New York on April 23, 1770, he again shows his devotion to Hebrew thus: "Spent the morning in reading my Hebrew Bible, and was glad to drink in the truth from the pure fountain of the patriarchs and prophets, without the least danger of human intervention." The same day in addition to this he studied Fox's "Acts and Monuments."

The first itinerants sent by Wesley to America were not illiterate men. Pilmoor especially was scholarly. Less than two months before he returned to England he wrote: "I was greatly comforted in reading my Hebrew Bible which I delight in more than all other books in the world." On the last day of the year 1771 in Philadelphia, he said: "I resumed my study of Greek, which I had been obliged to drop for some time on account of various business." On a yet earlier occasion in the same city he records that after reading a chapter in the Hebrew Bible he was "much comforted in looking over the lives of Archbishop Usher, Bishop Bedell and Mr. George Herbert." During his first term in New York he wrote: "I am enabled to consult the Hebrew oracles without depending altogether upon the judgment of translators."

Pilmoor's manuscript journal is almost wholly confined to his work as a Methodist preacher in America. It contains matter sufficient to fill several hundred printed duodecimo pages, and the writer's culture is apparent on every page. It is one of the best written works of the kind which Methodism has produced in this country, and it would not seriously suffer from a comparison with the best diary literature in the English language. Its chief defect is that of most of the early Methodist diaries, namely, that it is not sufficiently copious with respect to the personality, labors, and history of his associates in the work.

In Joseph Pilmoor the infant Methodism of America had a preacher of whom it had no need to be ashamed. His native gifts, spiritual qualifications, theological and literary attainments, and power of utterance, entitled him to take rank with the leading preachers of the country. He at once became a tower of strength to the Wesleyan cause in the chief centre of American life and activity in that day, namely—Philadelphia. In New York, also, as we shall see, he was a powerful evangelical leader. His physical as well as mental endowments were extraordinary. "He had a fine musical, deep-toned bass voice." His close friend Mr. Latimer, of Philadelphia, says that Pilmoor was "a choice young man, and a goodly. He was tall with well-knit frame and firm step. His dress at this period comprised a broad brimmed hat, shad-belly coat, breeches and knee buckles, white stockings and a profusion of long hair which hung in graceful locks. A voice whose volume and melody were perfectly marvelous enabled him to address vast multitudes with ease."

No description of Pilmoor's preaching at this time in this country seems to exist. Some time after his return in 1774 to England he was stationed in Norwich Circuit. The Wesleyan Congregation in the city of Norwich had been so much depleted both numerically and financially by the Antinomian defection, that "it was feared the chapel would have to be closed." The Wesleyan historian of that city shows the power and success amidst such obstacles, of the man whose laborious and eloquent ministry did so much for Methodism

in this land. "At the Conference of 1777," says this authority, "Mr. Joseph Pilmoor, at his own particular desire though an entire stranger to us, and though he had the offer of the first circuits in the connexion was appointed for the Norwich Circuit. He was a man of ardent zeal, of a vast grasp of intellect, and of uncommon eloquence. The chapel was soon filled again, great numbers of respectable people took pews, and many have since told me that they date their spiritual life from that memorable period. Many were then savingly converted to God and joined the society. Mr. Pilmoor continued with us two years. He was the instrument in the hands of the Lord in raising the society to such circumstances that when he left us we were able to bear our own expenses."*

The Rev. Walter Griffith was an eminent Wesleyan preacher. He was stationed repeatedly in London, and also served other chief circuits such as Bristol, Hull, Manchester, Leeds, etc. In 1813 he was president of the British Conference. At the Conference in 1780 Mr. Pilmoor was appointed to Dublin. The first time he preached in that city young Griffith heard him, and he "was charmed and delighted with the minister and determined to join the society. Shortly after this he began to meet in class, and was received on trial by Mr. Pilmoor, September 4, 1780. Toward the close of Mr. Pilmoor's second year in Dublin, Mr. Griffith and a few of the most serious young men in the society agreed to meet to spend an hour in prayer every Sabbath morning at five o'clock, and at eight o'clock three nights in every week. These were the beginnings of those prayer meetings in Dublin which have since been made of God instrumental of eternal good to thousands."† We shall soon see how diligently and specially Pilmoor labored for young men in America. We here see the influence he exercised over young Griffith in Dublin.

* A Concise History of Wesleyan Methodism in the City of Norwich in 1754 with its Progress from that Period to its Present State. By W. Lorkin. Norwich: 1825, pp. 22, 23.

† Memoir of Griffith, by the Rev. Edmond Grindrod. Wesleyan Methodist Magazine: February and March, 1827.

Our knowledge of Boardman is meagre, but no doubt he had literary as well as spiritual qualifications for his work. Whether he knew Hebrew and Greek like his associate we are not informed, but Pilmoor's references to him and his preaching show that he was a capable and even powerful preacher. Besides, his autograph letters reveal his mental ability and rhetorical skill. I have read a few of those somewhat faded documents, traced by the hand of the devoted preacher, and have therein seen the evidence of his literary training. An illiterate man could not have written Boardman's epistles.

Boardman was an effective preacher in the true sense. His sermons brought souls to God. We have seen this fact illustrated in the notable example of the mother of the eminent Dr. Bunting in England. John Mann was converted under Boardman's ministry in New York, and became a conspicuous preacher. He went to Nova Scotia as a Wesleyan missionary, and in the dark days of the Revolution, when New York was without a Methodist preacher Mann gave important ministerial service in that city. As the first missionaries of Wesley's appointment Boardman and Pilmoor did a work and achieved a renown in this land, as imperishable as Methodism itself. The first time their names appeared in connection with America in the English Minutes was in 1770, when Pilmoor's name stood first, thus: America: Joseph Pilmoor, Richard Boardman, Robert Williams, John King. In the Minutes of 1771 and 1772 Boardman's name was first. It has been understood by our historical writers that Boardman was chief from the beginning, but the order of their names in the British Minutes of 1770 would indicate that Pilmoor was then chief. The fact that the matters pertaining to the New York Chapel deed were formally inquired into and adjusted directly after Pilmoor reached that city in March, 1770, corroborates this view. One fact would indicate that Boardman was in control, namely, that in the compact for service he made with the Wesleyans of New York he is called the Assistant of Mr. Wesley.

That two preachers of such zeal, diligence, and devotion ;

of such intellectual force and equipment ; of such pulpit eloquence and power ; of such promptness, energy, and skill in action and administration should have appeared so opportunely on the new field of Methodism in America was visibly providential. They cleared a path for its march to its vast continental conquests before the military tempest burst upon the colonies. The training and propulsion which they gave to it prepared it in a degree under God to abide and to surmount the long and severe revolutionary ordeal. By their luminous and unctuous gospel preaching, and their faithful and wise pastoral supervision the embryonic Methodist Church in America was much invigorated and fortified. It was, as we shall soon see, founded in new and important centres in the land, as Boston, Baltimore, and Norfolk, by their labors. The fair Wesleyan tree, whose early growth they fostered and guided and which has attained to proportions so vast and is so prolific of fruit, became well rooted in America before Asbury, Rankin, and the others came to share their toils.

CHAPTER VI.

PILMOOR, WILLIAMS, AND WHITEFIELD IN NEW YORK.

THE labors of Joseph Pilmoor in the spring and early summer of 1770 were not exclusively bestowed upon the congregations that gathered in John Street. He was a true missionary, and as such sought to save men wherever he could. He ministered to condemned felons in the jail and to the children of adversity in the poor-house. He went into the adjacent country and upheld the cross to the view of the rustic population. He preached in the fields and in domiciles, as well as in the church.

He was intelligently interested in educational and ecclesiastical affairs, and one day we see him at a college commencement and on another at a convocation of the church clergy. We shall see him and Robert Williams again side by side in New York, exulting in the spread and success of their cause in the country regions. We shall also see him at the side of that wonderful evangelist, George Whitefield. Pilmoor saw that the important strategic centres of New York and Philadelphia must not be neglected, and therefore as the laborers were so few he deemed that he and Boardman were bound by the exigencies of the work to give the greater part of their time to those urban fields, until ministerial reinforcements should arrive from England.

We see Mr. Pilmoor initiating a rural movement, May 3, 1770. On that day he says: "Mr. Furbush, a particular friend, took me in his chaise to Harlem, a place about eight miles from New York where I preached to a small congregation with great freedom of soul and the power of God appeared to be very present among the people." The same evening he met the society in the city.

Two days thereafter he wrote a letter to the Rev. John Wesley "and all the brethren in Conference." That epistle shows the state of the work at that time in New York. It also exhibits Pilmoor's views of the needs of the country districts, and his belief that it was impossible for himself and his associate to meet the requirements of the cities, and at the same time render the needful service to the rural places. In this letter he gives a graphic picture of the condition of the field in those primitive days, which is of real historic interest. Addressing his "dear, beloved brethren" Pilmoor, under the date of May 5, 1770, says: "As it hath pleased God to send us, his poor unworthy creatures, into this remote corner of the world to preach his everlasting gospel, I trust you will bear us on your minds and help us by your prayers to fulfil the ministry which we have received of the Lord. We are at present far from you, and whether we shall ever be permitted to see you again in the body God only knows. However, though we are absent from you, yet we are present with you and I hope we shall continue so united that:

" 'Neither joy nor grief, nor time nor place
Nor life nor death can part.'

"It was a great trial to us to leave our native land; more especially to leave our fellow laborers in the gospel who were more dear to us than all the beauties of the British isle. Dear brethren, I feel, I feel you present while I write, but O the Atlantic is between. O this state of trial, this state of mutability. But where am I wandering? This is not our home. This is not our rest. After a little while we shall rest 'where angels gather immortality and momentary ages are no more.'

"Our coming to America has not been in vain. The Lord has been pleased to bless our humble attempts to advance his kingdom in the world. Many have believed the report and to some the Arm of the Lord has been revealed. There begins to be a shaking among the dry bones; and they come together that God may breathe upon them. Our congregations are large and we have the pious of most congregations

to hear us, which makes the Presbyterian bigots mad. But we are fully determined not to retaliate. They shall contend for that which God never revealed, and we will contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. The religion of Jesus is a favorite topic in New York. Many of the gay and polite speak much about grace and perseverance. But whether they would follow Christ 'in sheep skins and goat skins' is a question I cannot affirm. Nevertheless, there are some who are alive to God. Even some of the poor despised children of Ham are striving to wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. We have a number of black women who meet together every week; many of whom are happy in the Love of God. This evinces the truth that 'God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him.' The society here consists of about a hundred members besides probationers; and I trust it will soon increase much more abundantly.

"Brother Boardman and I are chiefly confined to the cities and therefore cannot at present go much into the country, as we have more work upon our hands than we are able to perform. There is work enough for two preachers in each place, and if two of our brethren would come over, I believe it would be attended with a great blessing, for then we could visit the places adjacent to the cities, which we cannot pretend to do till we can take care of them. They need not be afraid of wanting the comforts of life for the people are very hospitable and kind. When we came over we put ourselves and the brethren to great expense as being strangers to the country and the people. But the case is different now as matters are settled, and everything is provided. If you can send them over we shall gladly provide for them. And I hope in a few years the brethren will be able to send them back to England according to the appointment of the Conference." *

Though separated so widely from his European fellow-laborers Pilmoor kept in touch with them by means of epistolary communication. The ties of the old brotherhood were

* *Arminian Magazine*, London, 1784, pp. 222, 3, 4.

still warm and stretched unbroken and unstrained across the sea. Seeing the urgent need of more laborers he called for two additional preachers to come over. He was destined in the course of one and a half years to receive and introduce to the society in Philadelphia two new missionaries from England. Until then he and Boardman were to pursue their work and provide as they could for its multiplying exigencies.

Pilmoor "went with Mr. James Jarvis, on Wednesday the ninth of May, 1770, to visit two condemned prisoners in the jail, but he did not get much satisfaction" from the interview. "Though I spoke," he says, "with the utmost freedom and plainness they seemed to be quite insensible to the things of God and religion. When I had done with them a poor old man desired to speak with me who was of a very different spirit. I prayed with him and left him full of good desires and resolutions."

He visited the imprisoned malefactors again on the 12th of May, "and found them more concerned than before." The next day—Sunday—after preaching at seven in the morning, he attended worship at St. Paul's. The sermon was by a young man whose theme was General Redemption. Pilmoor thought the treatment of the subject defective and expressed the wish that some one would teach the youthful clergyman "the way of God more perfectly." That evening he "was much enlarged at the preaching but much more at our love-feast." He asserts that this love-feast "is the first that has been kept by the Methodists in New York and the Lord was remarkably present."

We have already seen that the "first American love-feast in Philadelphia" was held on the twenty-third of the preceding March. Now seven weeks later, namely on the thirteenth of May, 1770, in the evening of the Sabbath, after public preaching, the first love-feast in New York was held by the same fervent preacher. Of the occasion he says: "We felt the softening power of the Holy Ghost and our souls were dissolved with love in the presence of the mighty God of Jacob." It thus appears that Joseph Pilmoor gave this unique and beautiful service to the Methodism of America.

He attended the Commencement of Columbia College in Trinity Church on the fifteenth of May, and heard the orations of the students "previous to taking their degrees." He was much pleased with one on Obedience to Magistrates and Governors. In the afternoon he was again in the jail among the criminals, and also in the poor-house, where he "heard a Baptist minister preach who seemed to be much in earnest for the salvation of his hearers." The next day was "the anniversary meeting of the Episcopal clergy." He went with "great expectations" and found much disappointment. "The gentleman who preached" he says, "spent more than twenty minutes in ransacking the whole tribe of Levi to find out the power of the keys and the succession of apostolical bishops. Such labored nonsense may please the vulgar who have not an opportunity of better information, but can never satisfy men of understanding. Every man of reading may easily know that all the power in the Christian Church is derived from Christ and he had no connection with the Levitical Priesthood; for it is evident our Lord sprang out of Judah and was a priest after the order of Melchisedec, which was long before the order of Aaron."

Pilmoor persisted in his attention to the condemned men in prison and was with them again on the seventeenth of May when he was gratified to learn that they had been reprieved.

Vital godliness was enjoyed and preached by some Episcopal clergymen in America at that period. One such Pilmoor met in New York on the 28th of May, 1770, when he dined in company with the Rev. Mr. Graves, of New London. "He is a choice man of God," says Pilmoor, "and a faithful witness for Jesus of the life and power of godliness. His conversation was truly edifying." As we have heretofore seen, Pilmoor did not confine his public ministry to indoor pulpits, but he also preached in the open air. On the thirtieth of May, 1770, which was Wednesday, he "had a good time at five in the morning," and "in the evening," he says, "I took my stand in a convenient place near the city, and published the truths of the Gospel to a vast multitude of

attentive hearers, and God gave me his blessing. Hallelujah to his glorious name!" On June first he writes: "I preached abroad again and endeavored to set forth the amiable perfections and glorious offices of my Master Jesus, and had some hope my labor was not in vain." Pilmoor is described in "Watson's Annals of Philadelphia" as "a true field preacher."

Williams, that active and unresting itinerant, whose coming to this country partly on business was so opportune and fortunate for the infant Methodism thereof, and who, responsive to the demands of the work, gave himself thereto with so much devotion and abandon, is again in the city. On Sunday the third of June he preached in the John Street chapel. "Robert Williams who lately came up from Maryland gave us a useful sermon on the ascension of Christ," says Pilmoor. "In the evening I declared to a very large and attentive audience, 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.'" He adds that "Monday and Tuesday [June 4th and 5th, 1770] we were glad to avail ourselves of the opportunity of preaching morning and evening as on Sunday."

Pilmoor had a poetic order of mind which he exemplified in his description of a laurel grove and of a morning drive thereto on June 7, 1770. He says: "Having often heard of the grove of laurels near Kingsbridge I had a desire to see it; so Mr. Crook agreed to go with me. As the weather was remarkably hot we took the cool of the morning and rode gently forward viewing the beauties of nature. The sun rose with majestic splendor, and seemed joyful to run his appointed race. The pearly dew drops like studs of silver hung upon the plants and flowers as if designed to beautify the face of nature, while the stately oaks were gently waving their lofty heads in honor of their Creator. We soon reached the delightful spot, which far exceeds all description. The beautiful laurels arrayed in garments of unchangeable verdure, and decorated with a rich profusion of the most delicate flowers, at once charmed us. Here delighted with the matchless beauties of the place, I was led to admire the infinite wisdom and power of God, and could scarcely forbear joining with the justly celebrated Milton in his Morning Hymn

“ ‘These are thy glorious works Parent of good
Almighty. Thine this Universal frame how wondrous fair
Thyself, how wondrous then?’ ”

In this pleasing excursion he seems to have joined work with pleasure, for he adds: “In the afternoon I preached at Harlem to a very polite and serious congregation, and the Lord enabled me to preach the gospel with power.”

There was a gracious spiritual visitation in John Street on the eighth of June, and on the following day New York reverberated with startling peals of thunder. Says Pilmoor, “We met at five in the morning and God graciously favored us with his presence and blessing. On Saturday we had the most tremendous crack of thunder that ever I heard. It burst just over the city and gave the astonished inhabitants an awful proof of the wonderful power of the infinite God.”

The electrical phenomena attending many of the summer showers in America seem to have impressed solemnly certain Englishmen who sojourned here in the last century. Pilmoor, not in the above instance only but several times, describes them in his narrative. Richard Parkinson, an English traveller in this country at the close of the eighteenth century, thus vividly depicts an American thunder-storm. “A small cloud appears first, and very quickly gathers and blackens the sky. The winds begin to blow, with thunder and lightning so tremendous that a stranger might suppose that it would destroy everything upon the earth. The thunder-bolts will split the trees in the woods in such a manner as was very surprising to me when I first saw it; and made me believe the country was ordained by the Almighty, a proper place for convicts, as it would make them repent of their former sins.”* Mr. Wesley when he was in Georgia wrote in his Journal that “thunder and lightning are expected almost every day in May, June, July, and August. They are very terrible especially to a stranger.”

Williams must have spent some time in and around New York in the early part of 1770. We find in the “Old Book”

* Edinburgh Review, vol. vii., p. 56.

that he received from the treasurer of John Street Chapel, five pounds and eight shillings on the 20th of March of that year, which sum was paid him, probably, for ministerial service in the city and its vicinage. Twenty days previously £3 6s. 8d. was paid "for Mr. Williams' horse, while at Douglas's on Staten Island." Other items in relation to Williams occur in the book during the spring of the same year. It seems that he itinerated in the rural regions about New York. Pilmoor records, June 15, 1770, that "we were greatly comforted at the Intercession and likewise by the good news brother Williams brought us from the country. The work is spreading as far as New Rochelle among some French Protestants who fled to this distant country for the sake of religion."

Williams, however, felt the attraction of the field beyond the Susquehanna, where the extending cause urgently required laborers, and again he turned his face thither. Pilmoor says, Monday, June 20th, 1770, "Mr. Williams set off for Philadelphia on his way to Maryland, where the sacred fire is continually spreading wider and wider." There is reason to believe that, like Webb, Williams proclaimed the glad tidings according to the New Testament and Methodism in various sections adjacent to the Hudson, the Delaware, and the Potomac, in advance of any other Wesleyan preacher. He was the flying artilleryman of the cause in the days when there were only Boardman, Pilmoor, Embury, Strawbridge, Webb and himself to man the batteries of Methodism in America. There is reason to believe, from Pilmoor's statement above, that Williams was in Philadelphia for a short time assisting Boardman in the summer of 1770, and that he went thence to Maryland.

Robert Williams did not leave any documentary record of his labors, or if he did, it has disappeared from view. A tradition has been preserved in an authentic manuscript of one of his preaching adventures in a locality in Baltimore County, now embraced in Harford County, Maryland, which is strikingly illustrative of his method of promoting the cause. The date is not given, but the event probably occurred in 1770, as Williams went to Maryland in November, 1769, and

left there for New York some time in the first half of the year 1770. The account is from the pen of Dr. William M. Dallam, a son of Josias Dallam, who was one of the earliest and conspicuous Methodists of Maryland, and it is preserved with the papers of the Rev. Dr. Robert Emory.

Williams "reached our home on Saturday, having come from Baltimore," says Dr. Dallam, "and the next sabbath my father took him to the Spesutia Church to hear the stationed minister there, and introduced him to many of his friends and acquaintances among the congregation.

"After the service was concluded, my father proposed to the parson and vestry that Mr. Williams should preach in the church. They all objected. Mr. J. G., who owned the adjoining land, stepped up and suggested that Mr. Williams should mount an old tree which was lying by on his premises, adding that he would stand near and protect him while he delivered his sermon. Mr. Williams consented, and took for his text the latter part of the sixth verse of the tenth chapter of Acts. The congregation was very attentive until he had proceeded about half through his subject when one of the vestry offered a man a gallon of rum to pull him down. He rushed through the crowd and did so. The act created considerable confusion and some of the incensed assembly seemed disposed to proceed to further violence.

"At length it was agreed to decide the matter by vote. The majority were favorable to his continuing his discourse, and again the ambassador of Christ mounted the fallen tree and proclaimed the awful and momentous truths of the gospel. By the time he had concluded several of the congregation were struck to the heart, and among the number the Rev. T. G.* and his brother. I mentioned the above circumstance to Mr. G. during his last visit to the county and asked him if he remembered it. He replied in the affirmative and corroborated the narrative of my father who had been dead some years."

* Dr. Dallam by these initials probably meant Freeborn Garrettson, although in the manuscript the first initial letter appears in the form of a T rather than in that of an F. Garrettson was neither a preacher nor a Methodist at that time.

The Spesutia Church, where the above scenes were witnessed, was the oldest, or one of the oldest, churches in Maryland, and was near to the spot where Garrettson's Methodist Chapel was subsequently built, in a neighborhood known as Garrettson Forest. The land for this chapel was, it is said in a note found among Dr. Emory's papers, conveyed to the society by Freeborn Garrettson. Dr. Dallam says that Williams was the first Methodist preacher who visited Harford County, and that he was brought to the county by his father Mr. Josias Dallam. Pilmoor asserts that the work had spread into Baltimore County before Williams went to Maryland in 1769. With the exception probably of Strawbridge and possibly of Webb, Williams was no doubt the first herald of the new movement in the County of Baltimore, which at that time included what is now Harford County, and according to the tradition recorded by Dr. Dallam Mr. Williams was the first Methodist preacher in the latter county.

The Rev. Henry Smith attributes the introduction of Methodism into one part of Baltimore County to the fact that in visiting Strawbridge's neighborhood Samuel Merryman heard him preach and as the result was converted and then invited the evangelist who did him so much good to visit his neighborhood about twenty-five or thirty miles away. Strawbridge accordingly went there, preached in Merryman's house and soon after a class was formed.* Whether this was before or after Williams preached at the Spesutia Church locality, which was also the place of Freeborn Garrettson's nativity, I know not, but it must have been near to that time.

Pilmoor's first term in New York was rendered notable by his evangelistic peregrinations among the contiguous rural communities. More than once he preached at Harlem and he made one trip there to visit a long afflicted woman. On the eleventh of June he preached in an inn on Long Island. Eleven days later, in compliance with a pressing invitation to preach at West Chester, he with two friends proceeded thither. "The morning was calm and pleasant," he writes, "the air salubrious, the fields adorned with grass and flow-

* Recollections of an Old Itinerant, pp. 205, 6.

ers and the valleys stood thick with corn." When he had travelled about fourteen miles he met a young man who was coming to conduct him through the woods. He dined at Mr. Bartow's, "a good man descended from a family of French Refugees." Thence he proceeded to Mr. Bartow's brother's, who was clerk of the county, and then rode on to the town, where he says, "I preached in the Court House and found great liberty. After sermon went home with Mr. Smith's family and kept meeting in the evening." The date of this sermon at West Chester was June 22, 1770. We shall quickly see him going to the country again.

Whitefield, with whom Pilmoor and Boardman, as we have seen, enjoyed a profitable and memorable interview in London shortly before they sailed for Philadelphia, and who left England a few weeks after their departure therefrom on his seventh and final voyage to this country, had now reached New York. Of course Pilmoor could not fail to call upon the great preacher. On June 27, 1770, he says: "I had the honor to wait upon the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, and congratulate him on his safe arrival in New York. He was remarkably loving and affectionate and desired me to be quite free and frequently call upon him. My heart was closely knit to him as a choice messenger of the Most High God and peculiarly favored of Heaven."

Wesley wrote to Whitefield in the beginning of 1770 in regard to his preachers in America, and said, "Who knows but before your return to this country I may pay another visit to the New World? I have been strongly solicited by several of our friends in New York and Philadelphia. They urge many reasons, some of which appear to be of considerable weight. And my age is no objection at all, for I bless God my health is not barely as good, but abundantly better in several respects than when I was five and twenty. But there are so many reasons on the other side that as yet I can determine nothing; so I must wait for further light. Here I am, let the Lord do with me as seemeth him good. For the present I must beg of you to supply my lack of service by encouraging the preachers as you judge best (who are as yet

comparatively young and inexperienced) by giving them such advices as you think proper; and above all by exhorting them not only to 'love one another,' but 'if it be possible' as much as lies in them 'live peaceably with all men.' " *

Pilmoor's account of his intercourse with Whitefield in New York indicates that the eloquent evangelist loyally regarded the request in the above letter of his cherished friend, and, as he had opportunity, encouraged and counselled the preachers whom Wesley had sent to these Western shores. No doubt Pilmoor and Boardman were animated by the example and refreshed and inspired by the fellowship and preaching of Whitefield in the summer of 1770.

Whitefield preached in New York on Sunday, June 26. "I began at six o'clock," says Pilmoor, "that the people might be at liberty to attend him. In the evening he preached again, and as it was in the time of our preaching I did not think proper to interfere with him, and therefore did not preach in our chapel, but left the people at liberty to hear that most excellent minister of Jesus Christ. Oh, that the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls may crown his faithful labors with abundant success."

The presence and ministry of Whitefield in the city gave Pilmoor the opportunity for another advance upon the adjacent country. Accordingly, on Monday, June 27, he says: "As Mr. Whitefield was to stay some time in the city I set off for Long Island." At Newtown he found a fine congregation, to whom he gave a sermon from the first Psalm, and he declares that "the Lord made it a special blessing to the people."

The last sabbath of this last visit save one of Whitefield to the city of New York was the first day of July. He was then only three months from the close of his mortal voyage. Seven times was he tossed upon the stormy Atlantic in coming to toil in this new land. Now, with outspread sail, he was nearing the eternal harbor and about to cast anchor within the veil. As he was yet in the prime of his splendid powers probably he did not suspect that his barque was already ap-

* Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii., pp. 344-45.

proaching the shores of heaven. Indeed, less than two months previously he wrote that he "was rather better than he had been for many years." This Sunday in New York was well improved. Of it Pilmoor writes: "I preached at five in the morning, and at eight in the evening that there might not even seem to be any opposition to dear Mr. Whitefield, and God greatly rewarded me by converting a sinner. Unto thy name, O Lord, be all the praise."

The next day, July 2, 1770, Whitefield left New York for Albany. He turned his face northward, and proceeded to compass a large circuit before he should go to New England, whence he was so soon to ascend to the New Jerusalem. On the occasion of his departure Pilmoor wrote: "Mr. Whitefield embarked for Albany, and intends to visit the people in the back settlements. Truly he is in labors more abundant. Many condemn, but few are either able or willing to imitate him."

Of his journey from New York into the interior of the province the great evangelist wrote: "July 2, 1770. Sailed from New York with Mr. Kirkland and two kind old friends, and arrived at Albany July 6. Was kindly received by Mr. Bays and Dominie Westaloe. Preached the same evening, and went the next day to see the Cohoes Falls, twelve miles from Albany. O thou wonder-working God. Preached twice on the Lord's day at Albany and the next day at Schenectady, and was struck with the delightful situation of the place. Heard afterwards that the word ran and was glorified both there and at Albany. Grace, Grace!"

As Pilmoor justly said, Whitefield was "abundant in labors." He saw that "the night cometh." He felt what Tennyson has expressed,

"The tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me."

The renowned and tireless preacher is again in New York for the last time, and thence he wrote to his friend, Mr. Keen, July 29, 1770: "During this month I have been above a five hundred miles circuit and have been enabled to

preach and travel through the heat every day. The congregations have been very large, attentive, and affected, particularly at Albany, Schenectady, Great Barrington, Norfolk, Salisbury, Sharon, Smithfield, Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, New Rumbart, and Peekskill. Last night I returned hither, and hope to set out for Boston in two or three days. O what a scene of usefulness is opening in this New World. All fresh works where I have been. The Divine influence has been as at the first. Invitations crowd upon me both from ministers and people from many quarters. A very peculiar providence led me lately to a place where a horse-stealer was executed. Thousands attended. The sheriff allowed him to come and hear a sermon under an adjacent tree. Solemn! Solemn! After being by himself about an hour I walked half a mile with him to the gallows. His heart had been softened by my first visit. He seemed full of Divine consolations. An instructive walk! I went up with him into the cart. He gave a short exhortation. I then stood upon the coffin; added, I trust, a word in season, prayed, gave the blessing, and took my leave. I hope effectual good was done to the hearers and spectators."

Whitefield, before going to New York, was in Philadelphia. As Boardman was then in the latter city, no doubt he enjoyed the society and ministry of the celebrated preacher. Indeed at that time Whitefield preached in Boardman's pulpit in Philadelphia. A Philadelphia newspaper, in its issue of May 24, 1770, said: "Since our last the Rev. Mr. Whitefield has preached at St. Peter's, St. Paul's, the Arch Street Presbyterian and Methodist Churches to crowded audiences, and this day he proposes preaching at the Swede Church near Darby."* Boardman and Pilmoor were greatly favored in thus coming within the influence of this illustrious and apostolic evangelist. In him they saw a model of zeal and of labor and also of simplicity, fidelity, and power in the proclamation of the gospel. In eloquence, of course, he was inimitable.

Of his work in Philadelphia Whitefield wrote, May 24, 1770: "I have now been here near three weeks. People of

* Philadelphia Journal and Weekly Advertiser, May 24, 1770.

all ranks flock as much as ever. Impressions are made on many, and I trust they will abide. Notwithstanding I preach twice on the Lord's day, and three or four times a week besides, yet I am rather better than I have been for many years." About three weeks later, namely June 14, he again wrote from Philadelphia: "This leaves me just returned from a hundred and fifty miles circuit, in which, blessed be God, I have been enabled to preach every day. So many invitations are sent from various quarters that I know not which way to turn myself." Had Boardman's journal (if he kept one) come down to us as has Pilmoor's, we should probably see a record from his pen of the work of Whitefield, and of personal intercourse with him at this time in Philadelphia. No doubt the Wesleyan societies in both that city and New York received an impulse from the marvellous evangelical oratory of that wonderful Apollos.

The week of the departure of Whitefield from New York was to Pilmoor a time of physical affliction. Amid his illness, however, he enjoyed spiritual consolation. "On Saturday the disorder began to abate," he says, "and I found myself something better. This was a trial to me, as I had got within sight of the harbor and wished to enter in."

The time is now at hand for the second exchange of Boardman and Pilmoor. In a review of his work of almost four months in New York the latter saw reason for rejoicing. The twenty-third and twenty-fourth of July, 1770, he "spent in regulating the society, and found abundant cause of thankfulness. Several have been thoroughly convinced of sin, a goodly number have found peace with God, and believers are greatly built up and strengthened in the Lord. The word of the Lord has free course, and prejudice is in a great measure taken away. As this is the case I trust my dear Brother Boardman will see glorious days."

Pilmoor was to meet Boardman at Princeton, New Jersey. He left New York on the twenty-fifth of July, 1770, and advanced toward Philadelphia. Several friends accompanied him as far as Newark. They returned to New York after dinner, and Pilmoor and Mr. Jarvis went on to New

Brunswick, where they passed the night. It does not appear that Pilmoor preached in either Newark or New Brunswick, which were then small towns. The next morning they reached Princeton, which was a half-way place between Philadelphia and New York. There they met Boardman and some friends from Philadelphia. After two or three hours spent there together, Boardman went with Jarvis to New York, and Pilmoor went forward, as he says, "with my dear Philadelphians." In the course of his journey Pilmoor preached at Birdington [Bordentown, as I believe], in a Baptist meeting-house, and also in the town hall in Burlington, New Jersey, to a fine congregation, "with great freedom." The service at Burlington was on the twenty-seventh of July, 1770, at ten o'clock in the forenoon. The same evening Pilmoor reached Philadelphia, just in time to preach "in our own church." His sermon was delivered to an excellent congregation, from "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PHILADELPHIA HEROINE AND FIRST METHODIST DEACONESS— MARY THORN.

EARLY Methodism had among its conspicuous propagators some gifted and devoted women, whose names can never die. Of these was Susannah Wesley, whose piety, insight, and judgment were of great value to her son in guiding and promoting the new revival. But for her interposition it is doubtful whether the lay ministry would have been organized, for John Wesley at first did not approve it. His mother's positive declarations in its favor were conclusive with him. That lay ministry spread the cause rapidly over the British Isles, and planted and extended it on the American shore.

When Mr. Wesley heard a complaint of the irregularity of Maxfield's preaching, he hastened to London to stop it. "His mother then lived in his house adjoining the foundry. When he arrived she perceived that his countenance was expressive of dissatisfaction, and inquired the cause. 'Thomas Maxfield,' said he, abruptly, 'has turned preacher, I find.' She looked attentively at him and replied, '*John*, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favoring readily anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself.' He did so. His prejudice bowed before the force of truth, and he could only say, 'It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.'"^{*} Thus originated that mighty arm of the Wesleyan system—the lay ministry.

Besides Mrs. Wesley, Methodism in England had at an

^{*} Life of Wesley, by Coke and Moore, London, 1791, p. 220.

early period several "elect" women, who were notable ornaments and helpers thereof. Lady Huntingdon, Lady Maxwell, Mrs. Fletcher, Hester Ann Rogers, are imperishable names that are redolent of sanctity. Among the "elect" ladies of American Methodism, Barbara Heck and Mary Thorn were foremost in time and in usefulness. At a very early period of the cause in America, Mrs. Thorn became a potent and heroic instrument of its advancement.

It appears to have been in the year 1770 that she became connected with the infant Wesleyan cause in Philadelphia, as in a letter addressed by her to Drs. Coke and Clarke, July 29, 1813, she asserted that she had been a Methodist forty-three years. By subtracting forty-three from 1813, we have 1770, from which year we date her connection with Methodism.

Lednum gathered a few traditions of Mrs. Thorn, some of which are vindicated by old manuscript documents, and especially by her own autobiographic narrative. Born in Bristol, Pennsylvania, she settled with her parents in the South, where she married a Mr. Thorn. There she became a member of the Baptist church, under the ministry of the Rev. Oliver Hart. An autograph letter of Mr. Hart to Mrs. Thorn, dated Charleston, April 1, 1772, which is still preserved, shows that he held her in high regard as a signal trophy of his ministry. He refers in exultant terms to her conversion, calls her his "very dear child," and says, "As such I must still address you. No distance of time or place can ever make me forget the endearing character which points out the relation that subsists between us in the bonds of the gospel. If I should get to heaven before you, and should then be possessed of my present feelings, I would on your arrival address the throne of glory in some such language as this: Heavenly Father, behold a child whom thou hast most graciously given me, given me in an acceptable time when my heart was much discouraged and I was complaining—sure I labor in vain and spend my strength for nought—even then thou didst give me this seal. She has been my joy. I would now humbly claim her as part of my crown in these sweet realms of bliss. Father, she has come out of great tribulation,

has washed her robes in the blood of the Lamb. May she now walk before thee in white and join all this Heavenly throng in singing the wonders of redeeming love to all eternity."

Some time after her conversion Mrs. Thorn, then a widow, went with her parents to Philadelphia. There she prayed for divine direction in seeking a house for worship. While moving through the streets in her search for one she came, Lednum says, to a place where Mr. Pilmoor was conducting worship, and she entered it. "She was soon impressed that the Lord had heard" her and guided her there. Mrs. Thorn in becoming and continuing a Methodist encountered persecution. Her loyalty to Methodism was demonstrated by her endurance of the extraordinary animosity shown to her by her nearest human friends. She withstood not merely desertion by kindred and expulsion from her church, but also physical jeopardy. Her heroism was like that of Luther's and Wesley's.

The letter to which I have already referred which Mrs. Thorn in 1813 addressed to Drs. Coke and Clarke, is mainly autobiographic. She gives in outline the story of her life as a Methodist. I do not know that any portion of that pathetic epistle was ever in print. But for its preservation through almost four score years, we of to-day would know but very little of the heroine whose character and deeds shed lustre upon one of the early pages of American Methodist history. She refers to the reproaches of the early Methodists and says: "Such it was when Mr. Pilmoor and Mr. Boardman planted the first Methodist Church in America, when after having been a member of the Baptist Church seven years I cried, this people shall be my people, and their God my God. This I did not for honor, since in their meeting I was struck down nearly lifeless. At the hazard of my life I was pitched through a glass door, and when a leader of three classes I was reproached with the name of Mother Confessor, pelted through the streets and stoned in effigy. It was for this that one armed stood behind the class door to kill me, till the Lord smote him with a better weapon. For this cause it was that

my husband at the hazard of his life rescued a Methodist preacher from the mob by slipping him through a window. For this cause it was that I was soon called to make as great a sacrifice as perhaps human nature can bear—to forsake a beloved father and mother for the cause of religion. My mother, alarmed because one son and two daughters were under convictions, in the bitterness of her soul cried out, ‘These birds of passage have bereaved me of my children; they will all be in Bedlam.’ She then interposed her authority and said, ‘You shall either forsake the Methodists or we will forsake you and leave the country.’ A day of wormwood and gall, never to be forgotten, when my mind was in an agony, and that word of our Lord thundered in my soul, ‘He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me.’ I cried out, it is enough Lord, here I am, do with me as seemeth good in thy sight, only save my soul. Thus I gave my final answer to my dear mother, and never saw them more. This I suffered only for Methodism, their only cause of offence.”

Mrs. Thorn, as we see, became a class leader and also a band leader in Philadelphia. The “band” was a strictly close meeting composed of persons of one sex. It was designed for a fuller narration by the members to one another of the temptations and inward exercises of the Christian life than was expedient in the class meeting; and also for appropriate mutual counsel, admonition and prayer. The “band” long since fell out of use because it did not, like the class meeting, supply a real and enduring need. We find that in 1790 there were signs of its decadence in New York City. William Jessup, who was then stationed there, in his manuscript journal, November 25th of the above year, says: “In the evening I met the bands in the church, and out of better than twenty there were but three that spoke. I felt somewhat discouraged and exhorted them to do better in the future.” Methodism has wisely modified its methods as experience has shown to be necessary. We learn from Mrs. Thorn that in the early Methodism of Philadelphia the band meeting was maintained.

The Wesleyan revival gave to woman large opportunity for service. Mr. Wesley's attitude respecting the question of woman's work in his societies was pronounced. Mrs. Thorn probably was the first Methodist female class leader in America, and in the exercise of her gifts in that office she was in harmony with the views and teachings of Mr. Wesley. Indeed, as we shall see, at a later period in her life Wesley himself appointed her to be a class leader in London.

While she was active as a Methodist she also continued in fellowship with the Baptist Church in Philadelphia. This was in accordance with the Wesleyan plan, which left all the members of the Methodist societies free to remain in any church to which they had previously belonged. Jesse Lee says of the early American Methodists: "We were only a religious society and not a church, and any members of any church who would conform to our rules and meet in a class had liberty to continue in their own church."* Here Mary Thorn met a singular and severe trial, which in her letter to Drs. Coke and Clarke she graphically and pathetically describes.

"While a leader of three classes and two bands," she says, "I remained a member of the Baptist Church, which it may be remembered was not inconsistent with Mr. Wesley's first intention of Methodism. This however roused the elders and deacons of the Baptist Church. This was a community that I highly esteemed, yet for the Methodists it was given up. They appointed persons to reason with me for three months to resign my class papers and to renounce the Methodists. At last I and their other members that had met amongst the Methodists were summoned before the Association. We were called and examined singly. After having stood this trial we were placed before the communion table, where the ministers, elders and deacons sat, and after an exhortation, ten of us standing firm, the books were opened and with awful denunciations our names before the whole congregation were erased out. My heart being full, I said, Blessed be God, ye cannot erase my name out of the Lamb's book of life; we know whom we worship. The sacrament was ad-

* History of the Methodists, p. 47.

ministered, but we were turned to the left, and not allowed to partake. But I can truly say I never felt the Lord so present and precious at a sacrament as at that time. Of a truth he broke to my soul the bread of life. I could then and I can still say,

“ ‘Whom man forsakes, Thou wilt not leave
Ready the outcast to receive.’ ”

This was another sacrifice for the same cause.

“ With a soul full of joy and sorrow I returned home and found Mr. Asbury, who said: ‘ Now sister I will give you the right hand of fellowship.’ After this the Rev. Mr. Percy, cousin to Earl Percy, was directed by the Rev. Oliver Hart to persuade my revolt from the Methodists. This I also withstood.”

Mrs. Thorn’s expulsion from the Baptist Church on account of her devotion to the Wesleyan cause probably occurred in 1772 or 1773, for she asserts that it was after that event that Mr. Percy sought to induce her to forsake the Methodists. Percy and Pilmoor met in Charleston and there, in his journal, Pilmoor wrote that, February 20, 1773, “ he had a message from Mr. Percy, one of Lady Huntington’s ministers who is just arrived from England.”

Pilmoor refers to “ mighty tribulations ” which a female class leader in Philadelphia suffered. It is highly probable that she of whom he speaks was Mary Thorn. In Philadelphia in his Journal under the date of November 22, 1773, he wrote: “ I was fetched to visit one of the leaders who has long been happy, but is now under the buffetings of Satan. I spoke freely with her and had sweet liberty in prayer, so that I could not doubt that the Lord would soon bring her out of all her mighty tribulations and make her far happier than ever she had been.”

It was such heroic faith, fortitude and zeal as Mrs. Thorn displayed in adhering to her sense of right that gave to early Methodism its distinctive power and made it so aggressive and victorious. Such a heroine whose loyalty to her convictions of truth and duty had been tried in the very fire of per-

secution would not fear the devil nor his cohorts, whether the latter were of human or diabolic shape. There could not be failure of a cause which was led by souls of such apostolic and martyr mould and temper. Mary Thorn would not have shrunk from the stake and its flames, had she met the dread alternative. The Wesleyan system and doctrines were excellently adapted to promote evangelical enterprise and to win the approval and sympathy of the multitude, yet they could not have given to Methodism its unparalleled sway in the land, but for that vital experience and power which made even timid woman invincible in the presence of derision, bodily peril and abandonment by her parents and her church. The early Methodists triumphed by their faith, with which they became "mighty through God." They were of that army of the faithful, "who through faith subdued Kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." The Samson lock in which lay their strength was the experimental religion of which they testified—a religion which was "not in word but in power," which was "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Shorn of this experience and of their testimony thereto the Methodists would have been as weak as other men.

In the letter to Mrs. Thorn from her former Baptist pastor, the Rev. Oliver Hart, of Charleston, dated April 1, 1772, there is indication of the fact of her rejection by her family on account of her Methodism, and of the necessity which was upon her to earn a subsistence. He speaks of her as suffering "great tribulation," and he also says: "So you intend to travel with a lady. I hope it may be to your advantage on all accounts. But, pray, why are you never to return to America again? Suppose your relatives take no notice of you, there are many others who esteem you. I thought when you left Charleston you were to have returned hither again. You will find it much harder living in Europe than in America, and you are not calculated to go through a

great deal of hard labor. However, I hope God will direct you for the best. Peace be with you. I am, yours in our Immanuel."

Oliver Hart was a conspicuous preacher and patriot. He joined a Baptist church in 1741, in his native Pennsylvania, when in his eighteenth year. He heard the wonderful gospel eloquence of Whitefield, and also the preaching of the Tennents. In 1750 he was installed as pastor of the Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina, in whose service he labored above thirty years.* Ardently devoted to liberty, he became prominent in the cause of American independence. In 1775 the Council of Safety appointed him to travel in the interior of South Carolina to represent the political situation. When, in 1780, Charleston was surrendered to the British, Mr. Hart went north, and in December of that year became pastor of the Baptist church at Hopewell, New Jersey, which relation he sustained to the close of his life, which was on the last day of 1795, in his seventy-third year. His piety was reputed as not only genuine, but eminent. His sermons were "a happy assemblage of doctrinal truths, set in an engaging light and enforced with convincing arguments." He was a winner of souls. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Stillman, of Boston, one of the most pious and popular preachers in New England, was awakened under Mr. Hart's preaching in Charleston, joined his church, and, after completing his classical studies, was a divinity student under Hart. Such was the man who rejoiced in Mary Thorn as a seal to his ministry. She was one of the foremost of American women in religious labor and usefulness. When Hart approached the dying hour, he "called upon all around him to help him praise the Lord for what He had done for his soul. Being told that he would soon join the company of the saints and angels, he replied 'Enough! Enough!'"† His relation to Mrs. Thorn in the opening of her Christian career, and his epistolary intercourse with her subsequently, connects him with our narrative. Through her he contributed to the advancement of Methodism in both America and Europe.

* Sprague's *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit*, p. 48.

† Ibid.

It seems probable that Mrs. Thorn did not go to Europe, as Hart indicates it was then her purpose to do, but rather she remained and toiled in the Wesleyan revival in Philadelphia. Lednum says that "she supported herself by teaching a school." He says "she lived near the corner of Broad and Mulberry Streets, and often did Boardman, Pilmoor, Asbury, and others of the early laborers, turn into her house for retirement and intercourse with heaven." We shall presently see that when the soldiers appropriated St. George's to their use in the Revolutionary War, her house became their place of worship.

Mrs. Thorn was not only a class leader, but she had the charge of three separate Methodist classes in Philadelphia at one time, and also of two bands. This fact affords indication of her uncommon gifts and of the extent of her religious activity. It appears that at another time she had but two classes. In one of his autograph letters to her, which is yet preserved, Boardman says: "I am glad you have two classes; I should have no objection against your having three. There is a wide difference between being tired *of*, and tired *in*, the service of God. However, I hope both classes will be taken from you the moment you think yourself sufficient to be a leader. I look upon a deep sense of insufficiency as a necessary qualification of a class leader. It is better to wear out than to rust out. God will not forget the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labor of love. . . . Do remember me in the kindest manner to Mr. and Mrs. Wallace, Mr. and Mrs. Dove and Robinson, Wilmers, and to all and every one of your girls. May you be happy together."

The reference in this letter to Mrs. Thorn's girls appears to corroborate the statement of Lednum that she earned a temporal support by teaching. The presumption, therefore, is that she taught a school of girls in Philadelphia.

Mrs. Thorn was not only abundant in labors in St. George's, but she also gave herself with brave devotion to the more general and less agreeable work of the Christian vineyard. She was the first Methodist deaconess in this

country of which we have record. Though she did not bear the name, she did the work. She, too, is a worthy example of the lately established order of deaconess in Methodism—an order which is increasingly important and useful because of the sympathetic and Christ-like ministry it renders through gentle and saintly womanhood to the suffering and the perishing.

War and pestilence caused great occasion in Philadelphia for the exercise of the beneficent activity of self-sacrificing workers for Him, who, from his white judgment throne, shall say to his servants, "I was sick and ye visited me." Mrs. Thorn asserts that "when Philadelphia was besieged by the war, the famine, and the plague, I took my life in my hand, and by day and by night visited the hospitals and the sick and the dying, whether by wounds or the plague, when not the nearest friend would approach because of the infection. Thus, by attending them in their extremity, I sometimes had the consolation of seeing them die happy. This I continued till the Methodist chapel the soldiers made into a riding-school, and my house became their chapel." *

It was during the occupancy of Mrs. Thorn's house for worship by the Methodists that she formed an acquaintance with Captain Parker, who became her husband. The general accuracy of Lednum in the brief sketch he gives of her history is illustrated by his assertion that some time before the war of Independence closed "she married Captain Parker and they went to England." These facts her own epistolary narrative attests. Her departure to England occurred in 1778, as we know by her statement that Thomas Rankin, whom Wesley placed in charge of the American work in 1773, returned in the same ship.

"Mr. Parker's ship," she says, "returning to England, Mr. Rankin and other preachers then came with us, having a present made of their passage. All the way over we had singing, preaching and class meetings."

She subsequently deplored having left Philadelphia.

* Autobiographic letter of Mrs. Thorn (then Mrs. Parker) to Drs. Coke and Clarke, dated Liverpool, 21 Bridport Street, July 29, 1813. In MS.

"Here I did wrong," she declares. "Though at that time surrounded by war and bloodshed I should, as Mr. Asbury then did, have stood my ground and not have fled. I was accompanied to the ship by a number of weeping friends."

According to Rankin's statement they sailed to Cork. Boardman, who had left America more than four years previously, was then on the Cork circuit. "At Cork," she says, "my old friend Mr. Boardman introduced me to Mr. Wesley, with whom and the Methodist preachers we lived on terms of particular intimacy, for then my husband was a person of property, had a good ship at sea, money in the funds, and his house, his purse and his heart were open to all the preachers and the cause. Mr. Wesley appointed him a steward for Gravel Lane chapel, London, and me a class-leader, and so at Scarborough, Yorkshire, where my husband was steward and trustee and myself leader of two classes. Here also and at Newby our house was a welcome and a frequent home for the preachers and their families. Thus we went on receiving and doing all the good we could."

There are several autograph epistles in existence which I have examined, that were addressed to Mrs. Thorn by her two friends and pastors in Philadelphia, Boardman and Pilmoor. They show the prominence of this "elect lady," and the high place she held in their friendship. The letters addressed to her by Boardman, of whom we have but scant memorials, illustrate the mental and religious character of the man. None of his letters to her, however, show the year in which they were written. In every instance but one he gives the date of the month, but always omits the year. A brief letter from him to Mrs. Thorn is dated simply November 13, and is as follows:

"My Dear Friend:

"Last Thursday I left York and through mercy got safe to Trenton this morning. Think to stay in this round till the cold drives me away. How much to be wished for is the haven of eternal rest where toil, temptation, and affliction will all be over; where we shall have nothing to do but to admire

and praise forever. Things go well in York. Hope before long to see Philadelphia. Kind love to Mr. and Mrs. Dowers, Mrs. Robinson."

This epistle was probably written in 1772 and certainly not later than 1773.

One of the letters of Pilmoor to Mrs. Thorn was written after his return to England. It is dated Kingswood, April 9, 1775, and is directed to "Mrs. Mary Thorn, at Mr. Dower's, Arch Street, Philadelphia." Pilmoor therein says:

"Dear Molly,

"Fifteen months are elapsed since I had the happiness of seeing my dear Philadelphians and as much since I heard from you. I think I gave you an opportunity of hearing from me which might have been acknowledged if all things had been well. Suppose you think I had missed my way, you should give me timely warning and invite me to return. No more than I might have expected from one who has expressed a tender regard for my present and future happiness. My children should not disown me, for though I am absent from them, I am their father still. . . . I am at present fully resolved to go forward after Jesus Christ, and expect to meet you by and by either in the western world or in the world above us. In *this* we enjoy much happiness, but in *that* there is fullness of bliss. May the Redeemer bless you."

In one of the letters of Boardman to Mrs. Thorn he gave her some pertinent religious advice and encouragement. Among the counsels he gave her were the following:

"I received your very welcome favor a few days ago and was not a little glad to hear from you. You need to have made no apology for its length, seeing the longer the better. I still find you harping on the same string, an evil heart, unbelief, and a variety of (shall I say?) very pleasing complaints. When you read the Bible I intend sending you the first opportunity, perhaps it may lead you to think you lived in the days of old David or Jeremiah the prophet, and that

David after hearing your experience wrote the forty-second Psalm. It is a true maxim, 'the man is known by his company.' Don't fall out with yours. David is now in heaven after all his complaints and unreasonable fears, and if you and I get there too I doubt not we shall be ashamed of our doubts and complaints and wonder at our ignorance and presumption in daring to question His faithfulness and love toward us.

"We have need to do all we can for God, our neighbor and ourselves. He that watereth shall be watered. I'll tell thee what, my dear Polly, the Devil is too expert in the art of reasoning to be made a fool of. Reasoning with is meeting the Devil on his own ground where he is sure to conquer. You say you know this to be true. I hope then you are not enchanted, but will now quit the field, and for the future fight the Lord's battles as he himself directs. Put on the whole armor of God, as described Eph. 6-12."

Another letter from Boardman to Mrs. Thorn was dated New York, September 9, the year being omitted. It was, however, almost certainly 1773, as he speaks of "going home," which he did at the opening of the following year. This letter opens thus :

"How little do we know of the purposes of God concerning us. We still seem undetermined with regard to our going home. Perhaps it is best so. May it teach us to have no will of our own. God begins to revive his work here. I think there is a pretty general quickening in the society. A few have lately found peace with God. I find it is good to plow and sow in hope. The time of gathering in will come."

How wonderful has been the ingathering in the Wesleyan department of the Christian fold in America since those prophetic words dropped from Boardman's pen.

Mrs. Thorn's was a very noble and useful, and yet a somewhat calamitous career. In the early part of her life as a Methodist she, like St. Paul, "suffered the loss of all things" for her conscientious devotion to a humble but holy cause. To that cause she gave her consecrated talents, and in its service she must have wielded a very positive religious power in

Philadelphia. For a period she enjoyed honor and competence, if not opulence. But through all she held on her way as a leading woman in the Wesleyan movement. It was her privilege to be associated in friendship and work with Wesley, with Pilmoor, Boardman, Asbury, Rankin, Shadford and other luminaries of the Methodist firmament in two hemispheres. Then the blasts of adversity smote her. Repeated disasters swept away Captain Parker's worldly possessions and stripped the grand heroine at his side of temporal provision for her closing years. "We lost ship after ship," she wrote, "till we lost our all and were reduced to poverty. So we continue still, grappling with extreme poverty and the infirmities of old age. All our dependence is on our son." There was in God's good Providence one earthly consolation and support left to this valiant saint in her age and penury—the son whom she calls, "the stay and staff of our old age." Thus the darkness though dense was pierced by a star. Nay, more, her faith remained, and she yet could send forth from her storm-swept spirit one of her early and exultant strains, "Whom man forsakes thou wilt not leave." Beyond the roar and shock of tempests and billows lay the peaceful shore of the "better country," radiant, verdant, blooming, in whose tearless, blissful, and endless serenity the rudely buffeted soul of Mary Thorn was to find calm repose forever. Out of various and great tribulations this saintly woman, to whom Methodism owed so much, passed at last to her mansion and crown in the jewel-walled city of pure gold. She died, according to Lednum, "in the Methodist faith," which through all vicissitude and sorrow she maintained.

The son of Captain and Mrs. Parker, Lednum says, was for some time a teacher at Woodhouse Grove Wesleyan School, in England. He came, however, "to Philadelphia where he died, leaving a widow and a daughter" there.

The value of this gifted and holy woman to the infant Methodism of the then metropolitan city of America must have been incalculable. Her mental endowments and culture; her total consecration to the Lord of the harvest; her incessant activity and leadership in the white field where

her sickle was ever glittering among the reapers; her intrepidity of spirit, which no difficulty nor danger could balk or appal; her unselfish work as a deaconess of Mercy and of Christ among the sick, wounded, and dying in a military hospital; her faith which "the gates of hell" could not shake, and her love for the Christ, which surpassed her love for father and mother, brother and sister—a love which many waters could not quench, rendered her a boon above price to the new revival of Wesley in the New World. Her memory had almost perished amid the vicissitudes of receding time. Lednum excepted, her name has not hitherto appeared in any of the histories of Methodism in America, whether by Lee, Bangs, Stevens, or McTyeire;* but her record is on high. Her rescued memory will be immortal, and her spotless and imperishable fame will be especially cherished by the women of Methodism who will derive inspiration from the story of her martyr-like sufferings and triumph; and luminous guidance in a stormy pilgrimage from her rare example of faith, fortitude, and zeal, and of self-devoting service.

Mary Thorn literally surrendered her all at the despised but heaven-honored Wesleyan altar when but few tributes were laid upon it in the firm belief that thereby she pleased and honored Him who by sacrifice redeemed the world. His word to her was fulfilled; "every one that hath left houses or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold and shall inherit everlasting life." The sacrifices that wrenched her heart and the work she so freely and fearlessly wrought for Him have at last under His sure hand given her long buried name resurrection from the tomb, and poised it undimmed amidst the brilliant constellation of the heroines of the Cross, where it will shine a glorious and a guiding luminary in the sky of His Kingdom forever.

* There is an appreciative notice of Mrs. Thorn of ten lines in Bishop Simpson's *Cyclopedia of Methodism*.

CHAPTER VIII.

PHILIP EMBURY—HIS REMOVAL FROM NEW YORK CITY.

SOMETIME in the year 1770, probably in the Spring, Mr. Embury left the City of New York where he had carved an ineffaceable record as the founder of Methodism in the New World. All that is known respecting him and his labors there, warrants the belief that he was a man who because of his intellectual, Christian and ministerial qualities was worthy to bear this great distinction and honor.

The movement which he was instrumental in inaugurating in New York is well described by Charles Wesley :

“ When he first the work began
Small and feeble was its day.”

It is fitly illustrated by the mustard-seed of the Saviour's parable. Embury's planting has grown into proportions greatly beyond what it originally promised. The audience of five in his domicile in 1766 has swelled to millions. According to the elaborate statistics of the Churches of the United States, published in the *New York Independent* January 3, 1895, there were in 1894 in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, unitedly, 3,683,936 communicants. In all the branches of the Wesleyan tree Embury planted, there were, according to the same authority, no less than 4,941,529 communicants in the United States in 1894, having 53,457 churches.

A private book in which Embury inserted memoranda and which was long preserved, and probably is yet extant, contains the date of his baptism but not of his birth. He was baptized September 7, 1728. It is believed that he was born but a brief time prior to that date. His birth-place was

Ballingran, Ireland. To that country his ancestors fled from the Palatinate "one of the seven original electorates of Germany" in the early part of the eighteenth century. Philip was sent to school to Philip Geir, of whom Mr. Wesley in May, 1778 said: "Two months ago good Philip Geir fell asleep, one of the Palatinates that came over and settled in Ireland between fifty and sixty years ago. He was a father to this and the other German societies, loving and cherishing them as his own children. He after two days' illness went to God." Geir's was a German school, and after a period spent as a pupil in it, Embury attended an English school. Thus he obtained such an education as prepared him to acquire further knowledge and so to do the great work which he so well and so successfully accomplished.

After leaving school it is said that he served his apprenticeship with a carpenter. Embury with his own hand inscribed the account of his conversion very briefly in the small book containing his family records thus:

"On Christmas day, being Monday, y^e 25th of December in the year 1752, the Lord shone into my soul by a glimpse of his redeeming love; being an earnest of my redemption in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen."

He was married in the Rathkeale Church, Tuesday, October 31, 1758 to Margaret Sweitzer, of Court Matrix. In the summer of 1760 as we have seen, they with a company of German-Irish people sailed from Limerick to New York. Prior to his emigration he not only labored as a house builder, but also as a Wesleyan evangelist. Crook in his work on "Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism" cites from the Minutes of the English Conference of August, 1758, a record to the effect that Philip Embury and thirteen others were proposed for travelling preachers. Some of these, Crook asserts, "were then appointed to a circuit, and the remainder, doubtless including Embury, were placed on Wesley's list of reserves, many of whom subsequently went out to travel." Embury apparently never entered the travelling ministry but labored as a local preacher, while supporting himself by his own hands.

Coming to this country as one of a company formed in Ireland with the design of establishing a linen and hemp weaving industry, he and his fellow emigrants tarried in New York while awaiting an opportunity to obtain a location for their enterprise. It has been commonly believed that Embury pursued the calling of a carpenter during this period of delay and no intimation has been given hitherto in any published Methodist document that he engaged in any other secular employment. The truth is, however, that soon after his arrival here, he became a pedagogue. His character, native intelligence and acquired knowledge evidently fitted him for the work of a teacher.

So far as is known the earliest printed document extant concerning Embury after he arrived in America is his advertisement as a schoolmaster which was inserted in Weyman's *New York Gazette*, Monday, March 16, 1761, and was continued in the same weekly Journal in its issues of March 23, and April 20th and 27th of the same year, making four insertions. This advertisement was couched in the following form of words:

PHIL. EMBURY, School Master,

Gives Notice that on the first Day of May next he intends to teach Reading, Writing and Arithmetic in English in the New School House now building in Little Queen street next Door to the Lutheran Minister's. And as he has been informed that several Gentlemen were willing to favor him with their Children he gives further Notice that if a sufficient Number of scholars should attend his school, he would teach in company with Mr. *John Embury* (who teaches several Branches belonging to Trade and Business) that Children might be carefully attended, as he faithfully desires the good of the Public. He now teaches at Mr. *Samuel Foster's* in Carman's street.

Embury's desire to be useful is expressed in this school announcement. It was his purpose that the children who might be intrusted to him as pupils should receive careful attention, "as he faithfully desired the good of the public." The extent to which he was destined to promote "the good of" the American "public" by setting in operation the mighty reforming energies of Methodism was then to him unknown.

It would appear from the mechanical labor which he put upon the John Street Chapel that he afterward resumed his early trade. Little Queen street, where he taught, is now Cedar street, three squares south of John street.

The date of the publication of this advertisement demonstrates that Embury taught in New York as early as five years prior to the time when Methodism, through his agency, originated there. It is, at the least, an interesting fact that American Methodism, which has done so great a work in educating the youth of the country, was founded by a man who was, or, at least, had been, an educator.

Mr. Embury's labors as a Wesleyan evangelist in New York in 1766 and later have been narrated with sufficient detail in former pages. We have seen that he also founded Methodism at Ashgrove after his removal with the Hecks and others of his German-Irish neighbors to Camden Valley, New York. About the time of his departure from the city, the Old John Street record book shows the following entry : "April 10, [1770] To Cash paid Philip Embury, to buy a Concordance £2 5s." This, it is supposed, was a parting gift of his friends of the society to whom he had borne the relation of preacher and pastor.

John Embury, whose name appears in the advertisement above, was Philip's brother. There were at least four Embury brothers, who sailed from Ireland to New York in 1760. The wife of the eloquent Samuel Coate was their niece, her mother, Mrs. Dulmage, being, as we have seen, Embury's sister. Death entered the Embury family in the city of New York. Philip lost two children, and also two brothers. In the book of private and family memoranda which was kept by him, and preserved by his descendants who probably yet retain it, he recorded the death of two of his brothers as follows :

"Bro. John Embury died on the 7th day of April 1764 between 10 & 11 O'clock in the morn, Saturday."

"My brother, Peter Embury died the 24th of September 1765 about three O'clock in the morning."

It thus appears that Embury was in the grief of recent

bereavement, when, early in 1766, he began his famous evangelical career in the city of New York, and laid the foundation of Methodism in America.

The other brother, David, seems to have been a Methodist, and removed with him to Camden Valley, N. Y., and soon after returned to the city on business relating to the adjustment of the temporal affairs of the society. In the "Old Book" of John Street, the following document yet exists, with David's bold, round signature attached to it.

Rec^d New York, 13th Aug^t 1770 of Mr. William Lupton five pounds in full, being allowed me for loss of time and travelling expenses in Coming from Camden in the County of Albany to N. York in order to Execute an Instrument relative to the Methodist Preaching house.

DAVID EMBURY.

£5.. —.. —

David's visit to the city at this time probably had some relation to the new deed of the John Street property, which, as we have seen, was executed November 2, 1770, as a result of the counsels given to the trustees by Pilmoor and Boardman in the preceding spring. The above receipt affords further evidence that Philip Embury removed from New York to Camden in the spring of 1770.

Philip Embury's son Samuel lived to an advanced age and died in Canada in 1853. The Rev. Isaac Stone, who visited him in August, 1844, says: "The old gentleman is little of stature, and his hair white as wool. He informed me he was then seventy-eight years of age and had been a member of the Methodist society about fifty years. His father died, he said, when he was about eight years of age. A book lay on the table, to which the old man pointed and said it was once the property of his father. I took it up and found it to be a copy of Cruden's Concordance in quarto form. I looked on the blank page in front of the book, and there I saw in round, legible characters the name—Philip Embury—and the old man assured me it was the handwriting of his father." * That book "is now in the library of the Wesleyan Theologi-

* Mr. Stone published this passage in an article in the Northern Christian Advocate, and it was copied in the New York Christian Advocate, May 14, 1848.

cal College in Montreal. It is the third edition of Cruden, with portrait of the author, date 1769—a stout, leather-bound quarto, with a leather cover over the original binding. It bears the inscription in a clear, bold hand: ‘Phil. Embury, April, 1770.’ The book was presented to the college by Mrs. J. Rhicard, a great grand-daughter of Philip Embury.” *

The primary purpose of Embury's removal to Camden Valley was his interest in a large tract of land, which as we have already seen had been granted to him and others by the government of the New York province. The researches of the Rev. George G. Saxe, now of Madison, New Jersey, who had access to “Embury's family record and other memoranda, mostly in his own handwriting,” besides interviews with aged persons and correspondence with members of the family, have revealed some interesting data. Saxe says that some of Embury's old friends had preceded him to Salem, in Camden Valley, among whom was Peter Sweitzer, Mrs. Embury's brother. Philip's “family consisted of his wife and three children. The dust of their first two children they left sleeping in their soon to be forgotten graves. The youngest child, Philip, was born in Salem, April 13, 1772.” † While residing at Salem, Embury, says Saxe, “labored on the farm and at his trade, and was faithful in the discharge of his duties as a man, a Christian, and a minister. He preached and formed classes in his own and surrounding neighborhoods, and had the honor of establishing the first Methodist society north of New York. This was at Asgrove, where resided Thomas Ashton, ‡ of blessed memory, and the Irish Methodists. Mr. Embury held the position of civil magistrate, and was much respected by his neighbors, while his benevolent and sympathetic nature secured him many ardent friends. His piety was earnest and yet cheerful. It is said he was often heard singing hymns while plying the implements of his trade.” We shall again recur to Embury when we arrive at the period of his death.

* The Rev. Dr. Withrow, in the New York Christian Advocate, June 11, 1886.

† Philip Embury, by the Rev. George G. Saxe. Ladies' Repository, May, 1859.

‡ This man brought Robert Williams to America.

CHAPTER IX.

PILMOOR'S SECOND PERIOD OF LABOR IN PHILADELPHIA.

MR. PILMOOR began the second term of his ministry in Philadelphia July 27, 1770. The day following he was chiefly occupied in visiting his friends, "and was abundantly comforted among them." He was gratified to be in the Quaker City again, which, he says, "Of all places upon earth is most worthy of its name, which is *Brotherly Love*. The inhabitants are in general a civil, kind, generous, and honorable people." His labors were efficient both in the pulpit and in the homes of his flock. He restored peace in a discordant family, and perfect union followed the reconciliation. Some incidents of historic significance distinguished this his second term in Philadelphia. He diligently proclaimed the gospel in the adjacent country as well as in the city. After a refreshing season at the early Sunday morning service in the city August 12th, he preached at ten o'clock at Gloucester Court House, New Jersey, where "the people seemed just ripe for the gospel and received the word with joy." The same evening he was in his pulpit in Philadelphia, and discoursed "with great freedom" to a large congregation concerning the impotent man at the pool. After a five o'clock service in the city on the twenty-eighth of August, he went in a chaise with Mr. Harris to Pennypack, near Bustleton, where he ministered to a large audience. He then visited "some of the people from house to house," after which he went with "a few friends to spend the afternoon with Mr. Salter, a Baptist, but perfectly free from bigotry," whose house stood upon the Delaware River, commanding "a most delightful prospect of the Jerseys and a fine view of the har-

bor of Philadelphia." The next day Edward Evans preached in the morning in St. George's, on "Receiving grace from the Divine Fountain opened to the house of David."

In an early morning hour of September 1, 1770, Pilmoor set off with a Mr. Beach in a chaise for Methacton, in Worcester township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, about twenty miles north of Philadelphia. Pilmoor, in his Journal, spells the name of this place "Matching" and "Matchin," in conformity, no doubt, with the provincial pronunciation. The journey there on this occasion was difficult because of damage done to the roads by copious rains. He found a "simple-hearted and attentive" congregation "gathered from several miles round." He hastened to White Marsh Church the following day and preached to a multitude of various denominations. Here he received such hospitality from a Mr. Deweze, "a pious Episcopalian, as would have been greatly esteemed by the Patriarchs of old." He returned to Philadelphia in time to preach in the evening. Though very weary, he performed his work with much spiritual satisfaction and took "a collection for the expenses of the church and got ten pounds nine shillings. Thus," he exclaims, "the Lord provides for us and gives us all that we want." He held a love-feast in the city September 5th, which was rather dull in the beginning, but afterward "the people spoke freely, and even the poor negroes came forth and bore a noble testimony for God."

He preached at Gloucester Court House, New Jersey, again on Sunday, September the 9th, while Captain Webb preached in Philadelphia. Pilmoor addressed "about 3,000 souls on the Common near the city" at five in the evening. Webb preached also at seven in the Church. Pilmoor expected to preach at Burlington on the ensuing Tuesday, but was prevented by temporary illness. The next Sunday he was at White Marsh, where not half of the assemblage could find room in the Church. With a table for his pulpit, he stood "under the shady trees which spread their luxuriant branches" above the verdant turf, "forming a most beautiful canopy," and preached from "The end of all things is at hand," etc. After dining with Mr. Deweze, he returned to

Philadelphia and to a crowded audience preached on the New Birth.

The week in Philadelphia was filled with pastoral activity. Pilmoor exulted in seeing signs of harvest. He was constantly employed in visiting, giving advice to the inquirers who came to see him, "and preaching every day. The work," he writes, "now begins to revive; there is a great cry among the people, and many of the genteeler sort begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness."

He went with Mr. Beach to Pennypack, near Bustleton, where he expounded the Divine Word on the second of October, 1770. He intended to go to Burlington also, but says, "The weather was so stormy my friends advised me not to attempt to cross the river, so we returned to Philadelphia."

With Edward Evans he set off for Matching (Methacton), to open a new chapel, which, says Pilmoor, "was built by a few persons who love the Redeemer." Among these was Mr. Supplee, who became a friend of Pilmoor and whose house was his retreat at a time when, during convalescence from a serious sickness, he sought retirement in the country. This chapel at Methacton was the second Methodist Church in Pennsylvania. On the occasion of its dedication, October 13, 1770, Pilmoor preached at three o'clock in the afternoon, on 2 Kings viii. 17. "Mr. Evans," he says, "gave an excellent exhortation, and I concluded with solemn prayer. In the evening we had a love-feast, and the simple-hearted lovers of Jesus spoke with much spirit and life."

In his "Rise of Methodism in America," Lednum mentions this chapel, and says: "About the time the Methodists bought St. George's, a small stone building was erected in Montgomery County, about twenty miles north of Philadelphia, which has since been known by the name of Bethel. Mr. Supplee was the chief person concerned in building it. At this time he knew but little, if anything, of the Methodists, but believed that the Lord would raise up a people in his neighborhood to serve him. It was not long before the Methodist preachers found out the place, being invited by the founder of the house." It is a notable fact that this first

chapel of Methodism in Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia, and possibly the third in the country, was opened for worship by one of the first two missionaries sent hither by Mr. Wesley, and that the first Methodist preacher that came forth in America assisted him in the service. Lednum says that in it "a society was raised up which still continues, and, although it has never been large, it always contained a number of substantial members."

The Sunday after the dedication of the chapel at Methacton, Pilmoor preached at White Marsh, to an assembly so large that the Church would not contain a quarter thereof. He delivered his discourse standing upon a table in the churchyard, and then hastened to Philadelphia, where he spoke to a multitude on "Stand in the ways and see and inquire after the old paths and walk therein."

After preaching in the city in the early morning hour of Sunday, October 21, 1770, Pilmoor, at eleven o'clock, preached at Gloucester, New Jersey. Thus, while the work in the city was enough to engross all his time and powers, we find him toiling for Christ in various rural places on secular days, and also sometimes on Sundays. It has been alleged by Bangs and Stevens, and even by Lee, that Boardman and Pilmoor confined their ministry almost entirely to the cities. Until Francis Asbury came over, the rural communities heard them but little, according to these authorities. The present point of our narrative is more than a year anterior to Asbury's arrival, yet we have repeatedly seen Pilmoor almost from the time he reached this continent going forth to preach the gospel in the country, and it is reasonable to suppose that Boardman did likewise. We know that for over two years before Asbury appeared on the field Robert Williams literally went to and fro about the land from Norfolk to New York, and thence to Maryland, back and forth. Notwithstanding this, Ledmun says that Williams "hugged New York closely for about two years and a half." Webb, too, was an ardent and extensive itinerant for about five years previously to the arrival of Asbury; and Strawbridge travelled abroad in Maryland, and his evangelical journeyings brought him to

Pilmoor's assistance in Philadelphia, as we have seen, nearly two years in advance of the appearance of Asbury in that metropolis. Jesse Lee says: "Mr. Strawbridge was a useful man and zealous in the cause of God, and spent much of his time in preaching the gospel in different places before any regular preachers were sent over by Mr. Wesley to this country." There was a decided itinerancy here prior to Asbury's coming. We shall now see a new itinerating laborer advancing from Philadelphia to give propulsion to the movement in rural fields more than a year before Asbury came.

John King, like Robert Williams, appeared in America at a time when the need of Wesleyan preachers was urgent, and he did such laborious and valuable service as has given undying celebrity to his name.

King arrived here in the summer of 1770. He waited on Mr. Pilmoor in Philadelphia, and desired to be accepted as a preacher. Pilmoor refers to this interesting event in his journal, August 18, 1770: "I met with a particular trial. A young man waited on me who said he was just from Europe and had been a preacher among the Methodists, but upon examination I found he had no letter from Mr. Wesley nor any of the senior preachers in England or Ireland. Hence I could not receive him as a minister in connection with us, nor suffer him to preach among our societies in America. However, as he appeared to be a good young man I resolved to deal tenderly with him and treat him with all the kindness in my power as a stranger in a distant land and told him I would do everything in my power for him, only I could not employ him as a preacher. As this did not satisfy him he departed from me and was determined to preach whether I approved of it or not. So I left him for the present to pursue his own business, and was fully determined to be on my guard against all impostors, lest the gospel should suffer by means of false teachers."

Pilmoor did right. As the representative of Mr. Wesley who had committed to him a sacred and a weighty trust he could not accord ministerial recognition to an unknown man without credentials. His bearing towards King illustrated

the wisdom and the gentleness with which he administered his charge. King also did right. He longed to utter his message to the Americans, and no doubt thought he could not afford to lose time in waiting for the recognition which he knew he would receive. Therefore he went forth from Mr. Pilmoor's presence resolved immediately to enter the American evangelical field which was white for the harvest. We shall now see the sequel.

A historic day in the Methodism of America was the last Sunday of August, 1770, for then occurred an event which had an important relation to its progress. On that day in a graveyard of the poor in Philadelphia was inaugurated the American ministerial career of one of the most notable and successful Methodist preachers of the ante-revolutionary period. Pilmoor's reference to the event, August 26, 1770, is couched in the following words: "Our congregation was large in the morning and the power of God was with us of a truth while I enlarged on the words, 'Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer.' In the evening at six I wondered to find so few people in the Church, but I soon found out the cause of it. Mr. John King, the young man who was with me a few days ago wanting to be employed as a preacher, had published himself and was preaching in the *Potters Field* to a great multitude of people. When he had done they hastened away to the Church which was soon crowded, and God enabled me to speak with much power. The word was made more awful by a most dreadful thunder gust which came on while I was preaching, and continued all the time. The Great Jehovah uttered his voice, his lightnings went forth in sheets of flame and all the heavens seemed to be on fire."

A young Methodist evangelist who notwithstanding his failure to obtain recognition as a preacher had the courage and skill to gather and hold a crowd of hearers in a pauper graveyard, could not fail to become recognized as a fellow laborer of the Wesleyan missionaries "in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus;" nor to prove of real value to the new movement which required heroic leaders.

In only five days after his sermon in Potter's Field, John King stood in St. George's pulpit. With reference to that occasion Pilmoor says: "The Intercession on Friday [August 31, 1770] was a time of love and refreshing from the presence of God. In the evening Mr. John King preached his probationary sermon. Having conversed much with him since his arrival in the city, and found him to be a zealous, good man, I thought it would be well to try him. So I appointed him to preach before me and the leaders in the Church, and although he is by no means fit for the city, he is well qualified to do good in the country. As he earnestly requested it, I gave him a license to preach and recommended him to several gentlemen in the country in hope of advancing the Kingdom of God."

King was soon fully vindicated, not only by his fidelity and usefulness, but also by the Minutes of the British Conference which in this same year (1770) in the list of assignments of the preachers contained the following appointments: "America, Joseph Pilmoor, Richard Boardman, Robert Williams, John King." This seems to show that while King was without written credentials, Mr. Wesley approved of his coming to America and authorized him to labor here. The Conference at which the above appointments were published was held in London the same month that King presented himself to Pilmoor in Philadelphia.

Dr. Stevens' error in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," respecting the time of King's first appearance in America is thus corrected by Pilmoor. Stevens says King arrived here "some weeks" after Boardman and Pilmoor, "in the latter part of 1769." It is evident now that he did not arrive until nine months or over after the arrival of the first two missionaries—that is to say late in the summer of 1770.

King's ministry was effective and fruitful. The rural field to which Pilmoor sent him from Philadelphia was in Delaware. Jesse Lee asserts that the point to which King went with his license from Pilmoor was Wilmington, to "exhort among a few people who were earnestly seeking the Lord." We shall see that King was immediately useful there, and

that Pilmoor met him in or near Wilmington in the spring of 1771.

King promoted the progress of the Wesleyan cause when in the entire country there were but seven Methodist preachers, itinerant and local, himself included. He early labored in Maryland and still further Southward and signally aided the work in those sections. Jesse Lee in his "History of the Methodists" says: "In the beginning of 1774, John King came first to the South parts of Virginia where his labors were made a blessing to many people. He was a sensible, zealous preacher, and very useful while he continued to travel."

In the Methodist historical works but scant recitals of the events in King's career have been given. In a comparatively recent work by the Rev. M. H. Moore, namely: "The Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia," several new dates and facts concerning King's history are set forth which were derived from family records. According to this authority, John King was born in Leicestershire, England, in the year 1746. He heard Wesley preach and became both a Christian and a Methodist. He was disinherited by his father because of his Methodism. Moore also says that King was a graduate of Oxford University and of a London Medical College. Pilmoor, however, seems rather to discredit King's alleged Oxonian training by his statement after hearing his trial sermon that he was "by no means fit for the city." Still Pilmoor afterward testified that King "turned out wonderfully well and became an able minister of Jesus Christ." In less than seven months after Pilmoor licensed him King preached in Philadelphia again, and then Pilmoor said of him: "How wonderfully improved since his arrival in America. He is now likely to be an able minister of the gospel, and will I trust be a blessing to mankind."

It has been asserted that King was the first Methodist that preached in Baltimore. This is a doubtful tradition. Robert Williams went to Maryland nearly ten months before King was licensed by Pilmoor, and there is no evidence that King reached Maryland before April, 1771, almost a year

and a half after Williams went there. Williams had lifted up his voice for the truth in Norfolk, and New York, and Philadelphia, and in beginning his proclamation of the gospel in Maryland, it seems probable that he sought its chief city as a promising field for the good seed he was sowing. As we have seen, Dr. Dallam says Williams was the first Methodist preacher who entered Harford County, which was then included in the county of Baltimore; and he asserts that Williams went thither from the city of Baltimore. This probably was prior to King's appearance in Maryland.

There is a well-attested tradition, that King once preached in St. Paul's church in Baltimore. "One who was present," says the Rev. Dr. William Hamilton, "and from whom we received the information many years ago, said 'that Mr. King made the dust fly from the velvet cushion.'" The zealous Wesleyan herald did not, however, have a second privilege of proclaiming his message from that pulpit.

Moore informs us that King married Miss Seawell, of Brunswick County, Virginia, in the Conference year of 1774. His name is not found in the Minutes after 1777. He lived in North Carolina, practised medicine, and labored in the gospel in a local capacity. Bishop Asbury frequently mentions him in his Journal, "and there is abundant evidence," says Moore, "that he continued to the end an earnest, fearless, faithful preacher of the gospel." We learn from the same authority that King was present at the first Methodist Conference in North Carolina, at the home of Green Hill, April 20, 1785. There is a family tradition that as King entered the conference room, Dr. Coke, without a word of salutation, asked him to pray. Laying his saddle-bags aside, he offered the first prayer ever made in a conference in North Carolina.*

King died while visiting New Berne, in 1794, and his grave is in Wake County, North Carolina. Stevens says his death occurred a few years before 1855. Moore thinks it strange that such an error should have occurred, especially

* The Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia, by the Rev. M. H. Moore, 1884.

as Bishop Asbury speaks of the marriage of King's widow to a Mr. Perry. Probably the error resulted from confounding the father with the son, as their names were identical. Moore says that all of King's children became members of the Church of their father, and that two of his sons, John and William, became Methodist preachers. Bishop McTyeire, in his "History of Methodism," says, "the descendants of King are worthily represented in the Methodist ministry of Kentucky and Tennessee to this day." As one of the earliest and valiant leaders and heroes of the American Wesleyan movement John King will ever be illustrious.

The title to St. George's was not completed until nearly ten months after the Philadelphia Methodists occupied it. The church was sold at auction pursuant to an Act of the Provincial Assembly of Pennsylvania in 1769, and on June 12, 1770, it was deeded to William Branson Hockley. Two days later Mr. Hockley legally conveyed it to Miles Pennington, a tallow-chandler and a Methodist.* Pennington evidently received it in trust for the society. He transferred it by deed, September 11, 1770, to Richard Boardman, Joseph Pilmoor, Thomas Webb, Edward Evans, Daniel Montgomery, John Dowers, Edmund Beach, Robert Fitzgerald, and James Emerson, for the sum of six hundred and fifty pounds. The process by which the property was secured to the Methodists forever, Pilmoor thus describes: "I sent for the persons concerned and set about settling the church. I was rather afraid the person with whom we had intrusted it would give us much trouble, but God overruled all things for our good, and he quietly signed the writings, and all things were amicably settled. So the Methodist church in Philadelphia is as secure for our preachers as the chapels in London or York."

The interest became such that the multitude of attendants at St. George's swelled beyond the limit of its walls. On Sunday morning, October 7, 1770, Robert Williams gave them a sermon and in the afternoon Pilmoor preached at the end of the Market-house. "At night," writes Pilmoor, "many were obliged to go away for want of room in

* See Lednum's History of Methodism, p. 45.

the church. God gave me great freedom and boldness to declare his own counsel to the people, and his word went from heart to heart. This has been a precious day indeed. My soul has walked with God and greatly rejoiced in the light of his countenance. O, to grace, how great a debtor. Hallelujah!" The next day many spoke with the preacher "about the state of their souls."

The greatest Gospel-orator of the eighteenth century had now finished his herculean and apostolic labors. The eloquent tongue of the seraphic Whitefield was still. Concerning this mournful event, Pilmoor, on October 9th, wrote in his Journal: "I received the melancholy news of the death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield. Of all the pious and useful ministers that ever visited America, he was by far the most useful. There are many thousands of souls that have been deeply affected and savingly wrought upon under his ministry, and will undoubtedly be a crown of rejoicing to him in the day of the Lord. How mysterious are the ways of Providence! This man of God was suddenly snatched away, while carnal ministers and the enemies of religion live to be full of days. It is well that the Church does not stand on man, but on the rock of eternity, which can never fall."

Knowing and loving Whitefield, as he did, Pilmoor was sorrowfully affected by his sudden death. Only three months prior to its occurrence he and Whitefield were in affectionate personal intercourse in New York. With quickened zeal, no doubt, Pilmoor continued his activity in the vineyard from which his great fellow-laborer had suddenly departed to the heavens. The day after the mournful tidings reached him—October 10, 1770—Pilmoor had many to speak with him "about their salvation and the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom." He also had much conversation with a clergyman who, he says, "asked me 'why I did not go into orders.' I told him I had long been in orders. 'I mean human orders.'" Pilmoor answered, "But suppose I am satisfied with Divine?"

In the course of his ministry, Pilmoor was brought into contact with a diversity of persons. October 11, 1770, after preaching in the evening, "a young gentleman from Prince-

ton College," he says, "waited on me at my lodgings, with whom I spent a comfortable hour in conversation about the truths of the Gospel and the power of godliness. Who can tell but that dear disciple of Jesus may be an instrument of turning many to righteousness."

Nine days after this interview, Pilmoor had a tempting offer of a "living." He had the pleasure of dining at Mr. Roberdaw's, he says, where "I met with Mr. Turbul, a gentleman from Tartola, in the West Indies. He offered me a living of four hundred pounds a year, and would have taken me over to England, got me ordained, and put me in possession of the church. I told him I had no objection to ordination, but that I could not consent to settle in one congregation for life, as I believed I might do more good in the itinerant way." Yet he found the "itinerant way" laborious and exhausting, while his pecuniary recompense was very small. But a few days before this offer came to him he wrote: "I found myself very unwell. My breast and lungs were quite sore with so much preaching, and my constitution was much shaken. The congregations are so large that I exert myself above my strength to make them hear and do them good, and I bless the Lord my labor is not in vain." He declined the offer of a large salary and lighter labor that he might prosecute his arduous itinerant mission. His heart was fully devoted to this service. In the days following his interview with the gentleman who invited him to the Church in Tartola, he "was constantly engaged speaking with people about their souls, preaching, and meeting the classes, and found," he says, "my heart in the work. When this is the case it is easy and pleasant, but if it were not so it would be mere drudgery."

" His heart was in his work, and the heart
Giveth grace unto every art."

The power of the early Methodist preachers was largely heart-power.

Captain Webb was again in Philadelphia on Sunday, October 28, 1770. "I was glad of his assistance in the morning," Pilmoor says, "and his ministry was blest to the souls

of the people. At ten o'clock we went to Christ's Church to hear a young man just arrived from London. I fear such lifeless discourses will do but little execution. Not the sayings of Plato, but the love of God in the heart will promote true benevolence to mankind. At six in the evening our church was abundantly crowded with attentive hearers, and the Lord gave me power to preach free salvation now obtainable by faith. The following day I was employed in regulating the society and preparing for our quarterly exchange."

The last day of his second period of service in Philadelphia was November 4, 1770, when after the morning service he "preached to a great number of distressed fellow-creatures" in the poor-house on the impotent man at the pool. At night he delivered his farewell sermon to a crowded assembly. Pilmoor was reluctant at this time to say farewell to his congregation in Philadelphia. "When God is pleased to make me useful in any place," he says, "I should be glad to continue, but the connection to which I belong does not admit of it, and, therefore, I must for the present submit. Perhaps a time may come when I shall be more at liberty to follow the convictions of my own conscience, and to walk according to my judgment in the exercise of my ministry."

The following day, November 5th, he went with his friend Harris to Pennypack, where he preached. Then he proceeded to Burlington, N. J., and preached to a numerous congregation in that town in the evening. There he met a Quaker with whom he took sweet counsel—"a man" he says, "of excellent understanding, and yet, like Nathaniel, without guile. My heart is so knit to this blessed man of God that I find it a trial to part." Pilmoor made an appointment to preach at Birdington [Bordentown], but as it was court-day the people could not give him a general hearing. He, however, gave an exhortation to a small congregation, and pushed on to Trenton, where "he had been desired to preach." Then he went to Princeton, and was glad to meet Mr. Boardman there with two friends from New York. Boardman preached in the chapel of the college "to

a few students and some of the principal inhabitants of the town." Thus the Wesleyan Cause received recognition as early as the fall of 1770, in the chief literary centre of American Presbyterianism. After the sermon in the chapel the two Methodist preachers inspected the college, which, says Pilmoor, "is a large and elegant building, and one of the finest situations in America."

Pilmoor reached Paulus Hook, now Jersey City, on Thursday evening, November 8, 1770, having spent four days in the journey from Philadelphia. "As it was too late to take the boat," he says, "we concluded to leave the horse and chaise all night, and passed over on the small boat. My soul was exceedingly happy on my arrival once more in New York."

CHAPTER X.

LABORS OF PILMOOR, WEBB, AND BOARDMAN IN NEW YORK, AND THE RESULTING REVIVAL IN 1770-1771.

PILMOOR entered immediately upon his work, to which he was heartily welcomed by the Methodists of New York. He well improved the first Sunday of his second term in that metropolis, which was November 11, 1770. Of this Sabbath he thus speaks: "We had a glorious shower of heart-reviving grace in the morning. God graciously comforted me again at the Sacrament. At two o'clock I had the happiness of hearing Dr. Witherspoon, of Princeton College. He is a gentleman of superior sense, and preaches with remarkable accuracy, but not with so much divine energy as might be expected. Our chapel was sufficiently crowded in the evening while I opened and applied 'Ye must be born again.'"

Pilmoor's reference to Dr. Witherspoon recalls the services of one of the great leaders in the cause of American Independence. In 1776 Dr. Witherspoon was a member of the Constitutional Convention of New Jersey, and for six years sat in clerical dress in the Continental Congress. He was an advocate, and one of the signers, of the Declaration of Independence. He also advocated the Articles of Confederation. He was President and Professor of Divinity of Princeton College from 1768 to 1794, and as one of the fathers of the American Republic his name is immortal.

Pilmoor now steadily labored amid encouraging signs of progress. The members of the society were "pretty lively," and God, he says, "has carried on his work by the ministry of Mr. Boardman." Pilmoor planned a series of discourses, of which, on November 21, 1770, he wrote: "Being fully convinced of the vast importance of the Holy Scriptures, and

how necessary it is to the people to understand them in order to their present and future happiness, I began to expound the first Epistle of St. John. The novelty of the thing brought out a great multitude to the chapel, and it was a profitable season. This encourages me to go on, and I shall, if God permit, continue it every Wednesday evening while I stay in New York."

The last day of November he had a very large congregation, "many of whom," he says, "have lately been brought under deep concern of mind." Captain Webb again appeared on the scene of warfare in New York, and on December 4th he preached "on our Lord's charge to the Angel of the Church at Ephesus." The Captain's words, says Pilmoor, "were greatly blessed to the hearers." Of the next day Pilmoor writes: "We had a fine congregation at the lecture, and God gave me to speak with power and authority on the words: 'He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' After the worship was over a woman who fell down in the chapel while I was speaking, came into our house and told us, with her eyes flowing with tears of joy, that she had found the Lord." Of the last two days of this first week of December, 1770, he says: "Had a precious time at the Intercession, and likewise in the evening, while I discoursed on, 'Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Saturday, having a favorable opportunity, I was glad to send, as a token of love, some of our American fruit to the Rev. John Wesley, in London."

Sunday, December 9th, at six in the evening, Pilmoor preached an hour and twenty minutes on the Prodigal Son. The length of the discourse was due to his being "so drawn out with love to souls." The next morning he spent in his study, and had several persons speak with him about their souls, some of whom he "admitted into society. God is eminently present with us," he says, "is carrying on his work in a wonderful manner." On Sunday, December 23d, Pilmoor exclaimed: "The work of God still goes on. More have lately been awakened and some brought to the knowledge of

God their Saviour." In the morning of Christmas-day Captain Webb preached, and in the evening, Pilmoor. "At both meetings the Lord gave his blessing." The following day Pilmoor "Preached morning and evening to fine congregations of the most attentive hearers I ever beheld, and I had the particular satisfaction of returning thanks to God for two poor sinners, who have lately passed from death unto life."

The last Sunday of 1770 Pilmoor describes as "one of the days of the Son of Man." He adds, "my soul exulted in God's Salvation. I preached in the evening on, 'My Grace is sufficient for thee.' The congregation was wonderfully large and attentive; the glory of God filled the Church, and greatly comforted the people. Three precious souls were clearly justified under the sermon, and many believers made joyful in the Lord."

The last night of the year 1770 the New York Wesleyans had a watch-meeting which had been threatened by opposers who were made afraid by "the terrors of the Lord." The meeting continued until after midnight, the people witnessing the end of the old year and the beginning of the new one. Reviewing the departed year Pilmoor exultingly said: "This has been the best year of my life. God has wonderfully owned and blessed me in the work of the ministry, so that I have been made the highly favored instrument of turning many from darkness to light." At the watch meeting an adversary was vanquished. Not long after the watch night he called upon the preacher and desired admission into the society. "I find," says Pilmoor, "that he has been a great persecutor of his wife, and wanted much to hinder her from coming to the watch meeting on New Year's eve. But she at length prevailed upon him to go with her, and there God so touched his heart that he is now more zealous than she. Thus the Lord is pleased to display his victorious grace and wonderfully subdue the hearts of sinners."

At his weekly lecture on the first Epistle of St. John, the second day of the year 1771, Pilmoor says he "took some pains to show how groundless is that charge so often made that the Methodists were false prophets. How wonderful

it is," he adds, "that men should charge a people with this who have the least appearance of it of any set of people on earth."

There is no more interesting class in any community than its young men. They are to become the leaders of civil, social, commercial, and political movements; the creators and executors of laws; the founders of families and fortunes; the guardians of education and morals; the pillars of the Church and the State. Joseph Pilmoor not only gave special care to the children, as we have seen, but he also ministered specially to young men. Respecting this feature of his work in New York he, on Saturday, January 5, 1771, wrote: "Having for some time observed a great number of young men attend the preaching, and very few of them in the society, I proposed a meeting for them alone in our own house, and this evening I had a fine company of them." A week later he said: "All our meetings are favored with the presence and blessing of Israel's Shepherd, but that on Saturday evening crowns all the rest. The young people who attend are all on fire for God and Heaven." Again, in the same month he says: "On Saturday evening I met the young men as usual. Many of them were so affected that the room was filled with their groans and crying after the dear Immanuel." Of Saturday, January 19, 1771, he writes that, "after spending some hours in visiting the members of the society I had a most comfortable time with my class of young people in my own room." Still later, he speaks of an elderly gentleman who was at the meeting of the young men, and who wept as he declared that he would not have missed it for fifty pounds.

Constantly, on Saturday nights Pilmoor met the young men, until he left New York at the end of this term, in February, 1771. On the second of that month he said: "The young men met in the evening and we had our usual blessing. At present they bid fair for the Kingdom of God, and are likely to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ." The next Saturday night he was with them again and says: "At seven o'clock I was glad to meet the young men once more, and God gave us a special blessing. My heart is so knit to these

young men that I find it exceedingly difficult to part with them."

The last weeks of his second term in New York Pilmoor saw glorious times. The first Sunday night of 1771, the word of the Lord was quick and powerful, he says: "while I called upon sinners to turn unto the Lord, who has promised to have mercy upon them, and He gave us proof of it that night by receiving some poor sinners into His favor and family."

The following day the preacher enjoyed much-needed rest, having become "greatly exhausted with such abundant labor." The next Sunday he had a cheering smile from Heaven amidst his labors, and also "heard a useful sermon at church, and an excellent gospel sermon at the Moravian Chapel. Sects and parties are nothing to me," he exclaims, "as I heartily love all the lovers of Jesus. At six our own chapel was as full as it could hold, and the blessing of God was upon the congregation while I preached on the Importunate Widow. My whole soul has been this day on the stretch for closer communion with God. I can hardly bear the thought that precious souls should be lost."

The next day he "spent some time in visiting from house to house." He was taken to see a person who believed herself to be possessed of the devil. He spoke with her as comfortingly as he could, and had much liberty of spirit in praying for her. "After preaching on Tuesday night," says Pilmoor, "a few of us met together to wrestle with God for her deliverance, and found Him eminently present with us." The following day he set "apart some hours for visiting the people," and was "abundantly watered while watering others." In the evening he gave another lecture on the Epistle, and "was greatly comforted in speaking on 'When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'"

The ardent evangelist continued to care for the oppressed and the lowly, and he came in close touch with the poor. The last Sunday in January, 1771, after preaching, he "met the negroes apart, and found many of them very happy. God has wrought a great work," he declares, "on many of their souls." Less than a fortnight afterward "I had," says Pil-

moor, "a number of the people from the poor-house to sup with me, and found more satisfaction in their conversation than in that of the most refined and polite citizens who are strangers to God."

He began a visitation of the classes on January 28, 1771, and found their condition such that he declared that, "the Methodists in New York are not one whit behind their brethren in Europe, but in many respects before them." At about this time the society enjoyed a love feast, and "it was indeed a time of love. Many of the new members as well as the old bore a noble testimony for the Lord. While they were speaking of the goodness of God, His glorious presence seemed to fill the place and made it like the gate of Heaven."

Pilmoor's energies and time were fully absorbed with the revival in New York which accompanied the second term of his ministry there. Of this engrossment he, on February 2, 1771, thus speaks: "This day I had a little time for reading and meditation which was very agreeable, as I have had but little opportunity for study since the Lord began to revive his work among us. Yet I was never at a loss, for it was given me in that hour what I should say."

The first Sunday in February, 1771, was notable. The morning and evening meetings in John Street were of signal interest. "The people were much broken down" under the preaching; and the following day Pilmoor "was constantly engaged with people who were under deep impressions and strong conviction." Pilmoor remarks: "The word that is preached is like a sword that pierces into the very soul. This, I clearly see, is owing to the energy of the Spirit who is pleased out of weakness to ordain strength."

Captain Webb is now again in New York, and on February 6th, Pilmoor spent the morning with the brave soldier and some friends. A godly Baptist minister visited Pilmoor three days later, and gave him a particular account of the work of God in Virginia. "It seems," Pilmoor writes, "the Lord is working by them (the Baptists) in just the same manner as he has done by the Methodists. Vast multitudes are awakened by the preaching of the gospel, and more than

two thousand have lately made profession of faith and been baptized." This remarkable revival, the tidings of which Pilmoor received in New York while he was witnessing similar demonstrations of grace there, probably was in connection with the extraordinary evangelical awakening which began some time before this point of our narrative, and was then in progress, under the labors of the Rev. Devereux Jarratt, the very zealous and laborious rector of Bath Parish, in Dinwiddie County, Va., and another clergyman of a neighboring parish, the Rev. Archibald McRoberts. Those two clergymen, in that dark day in Virginia, labored in unity to spread evangelical doctrines and to save men; and they were instrumental in kindling a flame of revival which spread abroad and was seen afar. The Baptists contributed no doubt to the promotion of the great work. Indeed, Jarratt says: "Harmony, love, and concord subsisted for many years among my hearers, though not without some interruption. This small interruption was occasioned by the Baptists who, about the year 1769 or 1770, or it may be a little sooner, had begun to make proselytes in Amelia and some other adjacent counties. These, by their assiduity and continual inculcation of adult baptism, had shaken the faith of some and gained them over to their party." *

While Pilmoor was yet zealously toiling in the revival in New York, Boardman arrived there, and on the last Sunday in February, 1771, both preachers were in John Street, Boardman preaching in the morning. In the evening, says Pilmoor, "I took leave of my dear New Yorkers, and the power of God was with us of a truth."

The revival in New York City from which Pilmoor now reluctantly broke away to Philadelphia, continued under the ministry of Richard Boardman. Under date of April 23, 1771, Boardman made a report to Mr. Wesley of the progress of this glorious work in New York. His report is very interesting as a sequel to what we have witnessed already under Pilmoor's devoted labors. Boardman says: "It pleases God to carry on his work among us. Within this month we have

* Life of Jarratt, written by himself, pp. 105-6, Baltimore, 1806.

had a great awakening here. Many begin to believe the report, and to some the arm of the Lord is revealed. This last month we had near thirty added to the society, five of whom have received a clear sense of the pardoning love of God. We have in this city some of the best preachers both in the English and Dutch Churches that are in America, yet God works by whom he will work.

“I have lately been much comforted by the death of some poor negroes who have gone off the stage of time rejoicing in the God of their salvation. I asked one at the point of death, ‘Are you afraid to die?’ ‘O no,’ said she, ‘I have my blessed Saviour in my heart. I should be glad to die. I want to be gone, that I may be with Him forever. I know that He loves me, and I love Him with all my heart.’ She continued to declare the great things God had done for her soul, to the astonishment of many, till the Lord took her to Himself. Several more seem just ready to be gone, longing for the time when mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

“I bless God I find in general my soul happy, though much tried and tempted, and though I am often made to groan, oppressed with unbelief. Yet I find an increasing degree of love to God, His people and His ways. But I want more purity of intention to aim at His glory in all I think, speak, or do. Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief.

“We do not, dear sir, forget to pray for you that God would lengthen out your days ; nor can we help praying that you may see America before you die. Perhaps I have promised myself too much when I have thought of this. Lord, not my will but thine be done.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE WORK UNDER PILMOOR, BOARDMAN, WEBB, EVANS, KING,
AND WILLIAMS IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1771.

AFTER three months and three days of service in New York Pilmoor left that town February 11, 1771, for a winter exchange. He and Boardman did not go into "winter quarters," but braved the ice and cold of the winter of 1770-71, and also of the winter of the following year in alternating between the cities. Many persons came to take leave of Pilmoor, and about ten o'clock he set off for Philadelphia. With some difficulty he crossed the Hudson, which was obstructed by vast quantities of floating ice. He reached Elizabeth, N. J., about five o'clock, where he preached to a fine congregation in the Court-house on "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Many gentlemen followed him to the inn and hospitably invited him to their homes. The next morning a gentleman sent a carriage for him and kindly entertained him at breakfast. He went to Woodbridge, where he called at a friend's house, and his visit proved a blessing to the family. Coming to New Brunswick he found the Raritan River impassable because of the ice and the high winds, so he took refuge for the night in an old house, where he was "ready to perish with the cold." The next day, as he could not cross the river, he drove to a bridge about eight miles distant; but found "such quantities of ice that he was obliged to drive across fields" to avoid it. "After much toil and fatigue," he says, "we came to a small town [Millstone] in Somerset County, where we were obliged to stay all night. I sent word through the town that I would preach in the Court-house. Many presently gathered, and I preached on 'Christ

in you the hope of Glory.' When I had done many followed me to the inn, and seemed as if they wanted to hear more; so we joined in praise and prayer and they departed. It is probable I should never have seen these people if the storm had not driven us out of the way."

Early the next morning, February 14, 1771, Pilmoor started for Trenton, travelling with a degree of difficulty through the woods. Hindered at the ferry from crossing, he proceeded to Birdington [Bordentown], where he meant to preach, but his purpose was thwarted by his delay. "However," he says, "I got the family together at the inn, where there happened to be much company, who all came in. I gave them an exhortation." The next day many people gathered at the public house where he stopped, and begged him to give them a sermon. This he did gladly, "and published a free salvation to sinners." He then went to Burlington and preached in the afternoon. At the urgent desire of the people, he gave another sermon there in the evening to "a crowded audience of genteel and attentive hearers. God was present in the midst."

The next day (Saturday) he resumed his trying journey. "When we got to Cooper's Ferry," he says, "we were told that we could not possibly get over with the horses; so we concluded to leave them behind, and ventured in a small boat ourselves. The prodigious mountains of ice that were floating in the river made a most dreadful appearance, and threatened us with imminent danger. However, in about an hour we got safely over, and met our dear Philadelphia friends in peace."

From Monday until Saturday the courageous preacher journeyed across New Jersey on his way to the Quaker City. After this winter itinerary he wrote: "This has been the most dangerous, fatiguing, and disagreeable journey I ever undertook, and there was no necessity for it at present, only Mr. Boardman would come to New York, and I could not think of leaving Philadelphia without a preacher." This journey was accomplished more than two-thirds of a year prior to the arrival of Francis Asbury in America. Before Asbury joined

them, Boardman and Pilmoor, not to speak of Webb, Williams, and King, maintained heroically the Wesleyan itinerancy in this land, "in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils in the wilderness, in weariness and painfulness, in cold."

Pilmoor began his mission anew in Philadelphia Sunday, February 17, 1771. He found a few people in the church in the morning; at night the attendance was a little larger, but he exclaimed, "O, how different from New York." The next day the congregation, he says, "was pretty good. I was enabled to speak with a measure of power, and the Word seemed to make its way to the hearts of the people." The severity of the winter in 1771 is indicated not only by Pilmoor's trying journey from New York, but also by his description of the weather in the week following his arrival in Philadelphia, the greater part of which, he says, "was the coldest I ever remember. One day I was fetched out to visit a poor woman who was dying, and I was in danger of having the skin frozen off my face. This made it dangerous for the people to venture out, so that we have had but very few to hear the Word."

The departure of Mr. Whitefield again engaged the thoughts of our busy and heroic preacher. On March 5, 1771, he wrote: "This day I received a letter from London, informing me that Mr. Wesley preached a funeral sermon on that great man of God, Mr. Whitefield. What a pity Mr. Wesley and he were ever divided! However, differences in opinion did not separate them in affection, for they loved as brethren, and will undoubtedly rejoice together in the Kingdom of God."

Pilmoor did not find the work in Philadelphia in such a lively condition as he had left it in New York. He says March 6, 1771: "Since my return to this city I have been much distressed on account of the general deadness that prevails among the people, and have entreated the Methodists to betake themselves to prayer and supplication to God for a revival of the work." The ensuing month he wrote: "The work of God begins to revive a little, but it is nothing

like it was the latter end of last summer, and far short of what I saw in New York the beginning of winter. The congregations are middling, but I hear of very few either convinced or converted."

Pilmoor's weakened physical condition probably contributed to the continuance of the depression of the work at this time in Philadelphia. Since his arrival in America he had incessantly labored in all seasons without vacations. In the preceding autumn and winter especially, he had given himself unsparingly to soul-saving toil in New York. His journey thence consumed six days, including the time he spent in preaching and visiting during it, in an inclement American winter, with travel made difficult and even dangerous by ice and cold. The physical enervation thus resulting undoubtedly diminished the effectiveness of his ministry in this term in Philadelphia. The first of May, "when I went to church to meet the society," he says, "I was so weak that I could scarcely stand till I had done. My constitution has suffered exceedingly since my arrival in this country, yet I do not repent. The Americans are so dear to me that I could freely spend all my strength, and even life itself, to do them good." When he recovered his strength somewhat he began the visitation of the classes, and found the members in a better spiritual state than he expected. "Though we have had but few awakened or converted that I have heard of," he says, "there is much cause of thankfulness that believers have been greatly strengthened and built up in the Lord."

Among the ministers in Philadelphia at this time was the Rev. Jacob Duche, rector of Christ Episcopal Church, who in the outbreak of the Revolution was conspicuous as a patriot. On July 7, 1775, he preached a sermon in Christ Church before the First Battalion of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia on "The Duty of Standing fast in our Spiritual and Temporal Liberties." By their request the sermon was published. It was reprinted the same year in London, and announced there with other works which supported the Colonies in their great struggle. Duche also in 1774 offered the first prayer ever uttered in the American Congress. In a

letter to a friend John Adams thus wrote of that prayer: "I must confess I never heard a better prayer pronounced. Episcopalian as he is, Dr. Cooper himself never prayed with such fervor and ardor, such correctness and pathos, and in language so eloquent and sublime for America, for Congress, for the Province of Massachusetts Bay, especially the town of Boston. It had an excellent effect upon everybody. It was enough indeed to melt a heart of stone, and I saw the tears gush in the eyes of the old, grave Quakers of Philadelphia."

Three years before Mr. Duche offered this historic prayer Pilmoor heard him preach. Sunday, March 17, 1771, Pilmoor wrote: "After hearing that dear man of God, Mr. Evans, in the morning, I went to hear the Rev. Mr. Duche, who is one of the best speakers I ever heard, and what is still better, a precious child of God and a spiritual minister of Jesus. I *felt* what he said and was closely united with him in the love of the Gospel." On another and later occasion Pilmoor said: "At Christ Church I was blest under the Rev. Mr. Duche."

Duche was Chaplain to the Colonial Congress for a time in 1776 and enjoyed the friendship of Washington. When the British occupied Philadelphia he sent a letter to General Washington, who was at headquarters in what is now Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, "urging him to return to the bosom of good King George." Washington immediately directed the epistle to Congress as "a letter of a very curious and extraordinary nature."

Duche left for a foreign shore, and in a reference to him in a private letter, the original of which is yet preserved, Bishop Asbury says that Duche was not permitted to return from Europe. Asbury also says that but for his espousal of the Royal cause in the war of Independence, Duche would have become the Bishop of Pennsylvania. Bishop White of that State testified that he considered Mr. Whitefield the best reader he had ever heard, and next to him he reckoned Duche to be "the best reader of prayers" in the circle of his acquaintance. "He was," said Bishop White,

“perhaps not inferior to Mr. Whitefield in the correctness of his pronounciation. His voice was remarkably sweet. Mr. Duche was frequently oratorical in his sermons, but never so in the reading of the prayers, although always read by him with signs of unaffected seriousness and devotion.” *

Pilmoor preached at White Marsh on April 9, 1771, and eight days later he went to Wilmington. He at this time spent four days travelling and preaching in Delaware. There he again met John King, whom he had sent thither more than seven months before. On April 21, 1771, he enjoyed the ministry of King in Philadelphia, and remarked that he had wonderfully improved as a preacher. Robert Williams, too, was now in Philadelphia again, and says Pilmoor: “As I had Mr. Williams and Mr. King both in the city, I was glad to accept of their assistance, and we all united in striving together for the hope of the Gospel. Our meetings generally were lively.”

There is ground for the belief that up to this time King had not been in Maryland. He went to Delaware in September, 1770, and on April 18, 1771, Pilmoor met him there, but he gives no intimation that King had yet been laboring elsewhere. King probably went to Maryland for the first time very soon after his above-mentioned visit to Philadelphia in the spring of 1771.

On one of those April days in 1771, Pilmoor says: “Tuesday, as we had no preaching in our own church, I gladly embraced the opportunity of preaching to the poor prisoners in the jail, and afterward visited the criminals under sentence of death.” On Sabbath, April 28th, Pilmoor applied the Gospel to what he thought was a moral exigence of his flock. Some of the society had fallen into the evil of backbiting and slander, so he lectured on the fifteenth Psalm, “and did what I could,” he says, “to stop the contagion, and crush the evil in the bud.” He preached the same day at Kensington, and when returning to the city he was stopped by a Roman Catholic gentleman who desired an interview. “He told me,” says Pilmoor, “he had been to hear me, and in general liked

* Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 185.

my sermon except one thing. In speaking of the knowledge of salvation, I happened to mention priestly absolution and showed the people the absurdity of it. This it seems nettled him, and he said, 'Do you think, sir, that any man can forgive sin?' 'Indeed, sir, I do not.' 'But has not God given that power to the ministers of the Gospel?' 'No sir. All the power that God has given to them is declarative, that is, they are to declare to His people that He will pardon and absolve all those that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel.' 'And do you think the Church of Rome pretends to forgive sins?' 'Indeed, sir, she does. Did not Pope Leo X. send his Indulgences all over Europe and pretend to pardon all sins, past, present, and to come, for one shilling, which was the means of stirring Luther and in the end brought on the Reformation?' He only replied, 'O sir, you may take that back,' and suddenly withdrew from me."

The time for the fifth exchange of the two missionaries is at hand. On May 10, 1771, Pilmoor preached "on the hill." After the service he "was very agreeably surprised to meet Mr. Jarvis from New York." On returning, "I found Mr. Boardman at our house," he says, "and our hearts were comforted together." The indebtedness of the society now required consideration. "The next day," says Pilmoor, "I called together the trustees of the church to consult about paying the rest of the money that is yet due upon it, and we settled our temporal concerns in an amicable manner."

Edward Evans preached in Philadelphia on Sunday morning, May 12, 1771, and in the evening Pilmoor gave his parting discourse to his "dear Philadelphians." His journey to New York was sooner accomplished than was that which he made from it three months previously. He took the stage with Mr. Jarvis, Monday morning, May 13th, and about seven the next evening they arrived at Paulus Hook, where Jersey City now stands. There he greeted many of his friends who had crossed the Hudson to meet him. "When we got over the North River," he says, "I found many of the dear citizens waiting on the shore to welcome me back to New York."

Pilmoor entered upon his third term of labor in New

York with his accustomed zeal and energy. He very soon fell sick, and suffered excruciatingly, but he was quickly with his young men. They gathered at his house Saturday evening, May 18, 1771. "I met with them," he says, "to the great comfort of my soul. It is very remarkable that this meeting has been more blessed than any other. While I am in New York I shall ever rejoice to spend an hour once a week with them."

The first Sunday of this term, May 19th, Pilmoor was favored with the assistance of Captain Webb, and he says: "Mr. Webb preached in the morning, and the power of God was among the people, and likewise in the evening, while I preached with great enlargedness of heart."

He attended the College Commencement, as we have seen, in 1770, and now in 1771 he was also present on a like occasion. His training in Wesley's Kingswood School and his later studies enabled him to appreciate and enjoy these literary festivals. He viewed them, however, with the eye of a Methodist evangelist. On May 21st "I attended," he says, "the Commencement at Trinity Church and heard the orations of the young men that were studying for their degrees. One of them spoke well on love, and another on ambition, but I heard nothing about faith in Christ. This is quite out of fashion in our day, and a gentleman intended for the gown will pass very well if he says nothing about justification by faith."

He gave the last three days of May to an evangelistic excursion in the country, during which he preached at New Rochelle, East Chester, and elsewhere. A little later, in very hot weather, he preached at Cow Neck and Newtown, Long Island, and on June 6th he was in the city visiting from house to house. From this domiciliary work "Nature shrinks," he says, "but still I go on, and God is with me." There was "the shout of a King in Zion," on Sunday, June 9th. In the evening he was called to see a dying woman in the poor-house, in whom he beheld an example of grace triumphant "over abject poverty and afflicted Nature." A field-preacher, he, Saturday evening, June 15th, cried to a lis-

tening and decorous multitude in the fields, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." The next day (Sunday) a divine visitation was enjoyed in John Street. Many felt

"That speechless awe which dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love."

In the evening the people crowded the chapel. "As some had charged us with denying original sin," says Pilmoor. "I took some pains to convince them of their mistake." This indicates that Methodism was not yet fully understood in New York. It was still in the tentative stage of its progress in America.

Pilmoor was with his young men on June 29, and also July 1, 1771. Of the first date he says, "I met the young men. God is again reviving his work among them." On the latter day he says, "I went *privately* to hear how they proceeded, and was glad to find them so clear in their judgment and so devout toward God." In viewing the work now in the summer and recalling to mind the revival he witnessed the preceding winter in New York, he wrote: "When I was here last, many sinners were convinced and converted; now the work is chiefly among professors." By permission of the sheriff, he preached to the prisoners on July 6th. Three days subsequently he dined with Captain Devereux and several other captains, with whom he "had pleasing, profitable conversation, and was glad to find them willing to join in prayer." He preached at Rye, July 18, 1771, and was also at New Rochelle. Thence he went to Long Island and preached at Jamaica and elsewhere, faithfully sowing beside all waters.

A few days later he began a course of lectures in New York on "The Lord's Prayer." Serial sermons have been common in these later days; this method of teaching, however, was practised, if not introduced in this country, by Joseph Pilmoor. Two sermons in this series were preached Sunday, July 28th, another on the Friday night following, and two others the next Sunday. Altogether he gave nine sermons in the course. As we have seen, he preached a se-

ries of discourses on the same theme in Philadelphia, in January, 1770.

A powerful arm of the aggressive Methodism of the past was the weekly class. It was unequalled as a school for indoctrinating beginners in the religious life, and for the preliminary training of the lay evangelists and itinerant preachers whom Methodism thrust forth. Boardman and Pilmoor vigilantly maintained the class-meeting in this country. The latter met three of the classes in New York, on July 27, 1771, and says, "I found the greater part of the members in a prosperous condition, and going on in the name of the Lord." The love-feast, as we have seen, was also observed in those first years of New York Methodism. A few days after this visitation of classes by the preacher, he wrote: "In the evening we had our Quarterly love-feast. They spoke freely of the goodness of God, while a profound awe seemed to sit on every countenance. One of the poor negroes declared her heart was so full of divine love she could not express it, and many more of them were exceedingly happy." Thus it appears that at that time numerous colored people were members of the John Street Society, and some, if not most of them, no doubt, were slaves. Slavery was encountered very early by that Society. Pilmoor, in New York, wrote concerning the slaves: "If the people who keep them in a state of slavery did but take pains to have them instructed in the religion of Jesus it would be some compensation for the loss of their liberty, but this, alas, is too much neglected. Yet there are a goodly number of Masters in America who are glad to do all in their power for them." Whether in slavery or freedom, the colored people have shared largely in the redeeming ministries of Methodism. From the beginning they have been drawn to its altars, and to it they are greatly indebted for their moral elevation and for their emancipation.

Robert Williams again appears in New York City, where he preached on Sunday, August 11, 1771. Pilmoor says, "I was glad of Mr. Williams's assistance in the morning. He gave us a very good sermon on the Love of God, and it

proved a blessing to the people." Pilmoor, being about to leave for Philadelphia, gave his valedictory discourse in the evening. It was heard by "a vast crowd and many were greatly affected."

One of the many errors relating to the planting of Methodism in America, which mar the pages of nearly all its histories, is that concerning Robert Williams which Lednum gave forth. Lednum says, that as New York was Williams's "first field of labor in the New World, where he found kind friends and kindred spirits, he hugged it closely for about two years and a half, when he went to Virginia." This assertion is unjust to the memory of a sainted laborer, who was foremost in itinerant and apostolic service during the very period in which Lednum declares "he hugged" New York "closely." Williams came from Europe to Norfolk, and the time of his coming was in the summer of 1769, as there is reason to believe. Thence he went to New York, and labored in John Street before Boardman arrived there. The last of the following October he left that city, and on November 1, 1769, he was in Philadelphia, where he preached several times. The sixth of the same month, after preaching at five in the morning, he left Philadelphia for Maryland. Seven months later, "having lately come up from Maryland," Williams preached in New York. In seventeen days more he started again for his southern field, for on June 20, 1770, Pilmoor says, "Mr. Williams set off [from New York] to Philadelphia on his way to Maryland." The seventh of the following October he was in Philadelphia, and April 21, 1771, he was again in the same city, and August 11th of the same year he was in New York once more. These long itineraries by Williams were performed in advance of Asbury's coming. A fortnight after the arrival of Asbury, namely November 11, 1771, we meet Williams again in Philadelphia, and on that day we see him starting in company with Richard Wright for Wilmington.

Thus we have determinative proof in the Journal of Pilmoor, who personally knew of Williams's whereabouts on the above dates, that during the first two and a quarter years

after his arrival in America Robert Williams, instead of "hugging" New York City, was travelling over most, if not the whole, of the already extensive circuit of American Methodism. He travelled on horseback, for we can scarcely presume that he claimed the luxury of a carriage. Williams is mentioned in the "Old Book" of John Street, on March 1, 1770, in connection with the payment of 16 shillings 8 pence for "his horse while at Douglas's, on Staten Island." Three weeks later there is an entry in the same book of 12 shillings "paid more for keeping his horse," and August 30, 1771, there is still another record of 18 shillings paid to "Caleb Hyatt for Mr. Williams's horse keeping." From 1769 to the arrival of Asbury, in the latter part of 1771, Williams penetrated many rural neighborhoods from New Rochelle in the North, to the region of the Chesapeake, and poured from his anointed lips the thrilling strains of a divine salvation. We meet him only occasionally, yet with sufficient frequency, to know that he was an alert, invincible and powerful itinerant herald of the evangelical doctrines.

Lednum fell into error again concerning Williams, when he asserted that "John King seems to have been the first of the four preachers who came over in 1769, that entered the Maryland field." Not four, but three preachers only came hither in that year, namely, Williams, Boardman, and Pilmoor. King did not arrive until the summer of the following year. Nor was King the first of these who went to Maryland, as has been shown already, for Williams labored in that province for some time and had thence returned to New York, before King began his ministry in America.

Pilmoor commenced preparations for his journey to Philadelphia on August 12, 1771, in his sixth exchange with Boardman. "In the evening," he says, "a great number of the dear people went over the river with me to Paulus Hook. After supper we had a solemn season while we joined in prayer to the Infinite God, who has so closely united our hearts in the bonds of the Gospel. Most of them then returned to the city, and the rest determined to wait and see me set off in the morning." The next day in company with

Mr. Newton, Pilmoor took the stage for Philadelphia, where after a very pleasant journey they arrived the following evening, August 14, 1771.

Pilmoor's previous term in Philadelphia did not furnish many occasions of exultation. Rather he labored under a degree of depression arising, no doubt, from his bodily enervation, as well as from the absence of such visible results of his ministry as he had formerly witnessed in that city. Though the cause was maintained, its advancement was not such as he longed to see. Now he enters upon his fourth term of preaching in the Quaker City under more hopeful conditions. He remembered the triumphs of his earlier ministry there, and he looked to the same source of power for similar victories. Signs of prosperity quickly appeared.

Boardman remained in Philadelphia until the second day after Pilmoor's arrival. "Mr. Boardman took his departure for New York" August 15th, writes Pilmoor, "and I entered upon my work in Philadelphia. My heart was deeply affected at the consideration of what I had seen in this city some time ago. The Word did then run, and was glorified indeed, and God is still the same."

On the first Sabbath of his fourth term in Philadelphia Pilmoor was refreshed at the morning's service and also in hearing Dr. Witherspoon in the Arch Street Church, but he says, "My greatest comfort was in the evening while I published the everlasting Gospel to about fifteen hundred people in our own church, who all attended in solemn silence. After preaching a man came to me in great distress. He had been a member of the Methodist Society in Dublin, but was drawn into sin and wandered from God. He now feels a strong desire to return."

A laborious but happy day to the indefatigable preacher was the first Sunday of September, 1771. "I began my work," he says, "in the sanctuary with that glorious invitation, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,' etc. After dinner I took my stand on the steps of the State House, where I explained to a prodigious multitude, 'Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and

loosed him and forgave him the debt.' As I was obliged to exert myself, I was pretty much fatigued, but an hour's rest restored me so that I was able to preach to a vast crowd in the church at six o'clock, and my heart rejoiced in God, my Saviour, while I cried, 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.' This was like one of our *old* times. The people were as serious as death, receiving the word of the Lord with eagerness. Nor was it in vain. Many were greatly refreshed, and one poor sinner was brought into the liberty of the Sons of God. The next day I had many to speak with me of the things of God, several of whom are waiting for redemption in the blood of the Lamb."

The next Sunday, September 8, Pilmoor preached in the city in the morning, and then preached again at Gloucester, N. J. That night he had "a vast congregation" in Philadelphia. On Monday he "spent some hours in visiting from house to house," and says, "I found it profitable to myself as well as to the people. At seven the church was almost as full as on Sunday evenings, and all sat with the deepest seriousness while I preached on 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.' This was one of the most solemn hours of my life and one of the most profitable. I felt as though I saw the Judge on his Great White Throne, and all the thoughts and intents of my heart were laid open before him. I could bless his name for some degree of rectitude of both heart and life, but would not for a thousand worlds have ventured my soul upon it. On Zion's rock I build and there I stand secure."

At five o'clock in the morning of the following Tuesday he had "a fine congregation," and "God gave his blessing with the Word." Wednesday, the 11th, he says, "I had several persons speak with me about the way of salvation, one of whom was a *Papist*. At present he is in great distress of soul and waiting for salvation, not by works of righteousness which he has done, but by the mercy of God through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ." He adds the remark that "when Roman Catholics come to be converted

they make excellent Christians," which implies that he had known such examples. We shall see that this was not the only instance of a Catholic coming to him to inquire the way of life.

The great proportion of the Roman Catholic population in our cities constitutes one of the problems of American city evangelization. Catholics were in the cities when Boardman and Pilmoor labored here, though in less numbers proportionately than now. While they by their ministry reached persons of almost every class in New York and Philadelphia, they did not fail of access to Papists. A prominent Catholic priest once told me that a high Catholic authority has estimated that five millions of adherents of the Roman Catholic Church have been lost to it in America. Many adherents of that church have experienced a spiritual conversion through the ministry of Methodism.

Pilmoor was in St. George's in the morning of the Lord's Day, September 15, where he uttered "strong words," which were borne upon the hearers with vividness and power. At 11 o'clock he was at Chestnut Hill, ten miles distant, where, amidst shadowing trees, he preached to "a vast congregation" on "Flee from the wrath to come." Of this impressive rural scene he says: "The fine spreading oaks formed a noble canopy above us, and we were as happy in the grove as in the most pompous temple." On returning to the city he felt much fatigued, but says, "the Lord so renewed my strength in preaching to the great congregation that I was as able to preach as if I had rested all the day." The next Sabbath was a good day. Pilmoor declares, "we had a gracious visitation from the Lord which made us rejoice and exult in His name. Afterward I heard an excellent sermon from Mr. Duche."

Horse-racing was practised at that time, and at the general society, September 25, 1771, Pilmoor cautioned the Methodists against going to the horse-race which was soon to occur. "From January 1, 1892, to January 1, 1893, the stakes and purses of American race-courses amounted to \$5,000,000, and the betting upon the races was fully

\$400,000,000.” The Rev. F. W. Robertson says, “there is a gambling spirit in human nature.” * That spirit it is the mission of the Church to exorcise. Had Pilmoor’s caution to the Philadelphia Methodists been heeded by the American people, this source of human demoralization in this country would have ceased.

Pilmoor came in contact with the quiet Friends in the Quaker City, and was sometimes refreshed with them. He went to visit “that dear man of God, George Dilwyn,” with whom he sustained a friendly relation. “He is one of the best preachers I have ever heard among the Quakers,” he writes. “My heart is so united with him that I trust we shall live together in the heaven of heavens forever and ever.”

While he visited from house to house he redeemed time for solitary meditation and study. “I am glad to visit the people,” he says, “and do all in my power to further them in the way of salvation, but I hate gossiping, as it directly tends to dissipate the mind and promotes lightness and trifling. Hence, I think it my duty to be as much as possible in my closet, striving to furnish myself with matter for the great work of the Lord.”

There were more than two hundred people at the weekday early morning service in St. George’s the 22d of October, 1771. “The Lord caused us to rejoice in his salvation,” says Pilmoor. “Afterwards spent an hour with Mr. Coates and his family, where the Lord has lately wrought a wonderful change by the preaching of His Gospel. The work now begins to revive again; many flock to the preaching and begin to inquire what they must do to be saved. Believers are comforted and backsliders healed.” We shall witness in a future chapter the completion of Pilmoor’s labors in this, his fourth, term in Philadelphia.

* Robertson’s Sermons, Third Series, p. 65.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OUTSPREAD OF METHODISM IN THE COUNTRY PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF FRANCIS ASBURY.

WILLIAM WATTERS, who was converted in Maryland, in 1771, asserts that up to the summer of that year there had been but three Methodist preachers in that province, and that these were Strawbridge, Williams, and King. Soon afterward Richard Owings, or Owen (both spellings of the name occur in the early records), appeared as a local evangelist in Maryland. Except Evans, Owen, as we have seen, was the first preacher raised up by Methodism in America. Therefore, in the summer of 1771, there were only eight Methodist preachers in America. They were Philip Embury, Thomas Webb, Richard Boardman, Joseph Pilmoor, Robert Williams, Edward Evans, and John King. The spread of the Wesleyan movement over the country, prior to the arrival of Francis Asbury, was due to the labors of these nine men.

We are now to inquire as to the extent Methodism had spread abroad in the country anterior to the time of Asbury's arrival. Captain Webb began to preach as early at least as 1767, on Long Island, where "within six months about twenty-four persons received justifying Grace."* As Webb lived at Jamaica, Long Island, it is probable that he preached there nearly, if not quite, as early as he preached in New York.

The work began in Maryland previous to the summer of 1768, for in August of that year the tidings that "a few people in Maryland had lately been awakened under the ministry of Robert Strawbridge" were borne to the English Conference. As, according to Pilmoor, "the people" who had

* Thomas Taylor's letter to Mr. Wesley, dated New York, April 11, 1768.

been thus "awakened" at that time were "few," and their awakening had but "lately" occurred, it seems clear that the movement in Maryland under Strawbridge did not begin very long before August, 1768, probably as early, however, as the preceding year. Robert Williams left Philadelphia, November 6, 1769, for Maryland, and he returned northward in the following spring. He preached in New York City, says Pilmoor, June 3, 1770, having "lately come up from Maryland." A little more than a fortnight later Williams again started for Maryland, and at that time Pilmoor declared that Methodism was "continually spreading wider and wider" in that province. As early as the fall of 1769 it had spread into Baltimore County.

William Watters lived in Baltimore County, and in his autobiography he says that some time in July, 1770, he had frequent opportunities of hearing Methodist preaching in his neighborhood. Though his parents were strict members of the Church of England, he says that he had none to teach him the way of salvation. The two parish clergymen he knew had no gifts for the ministry, and besides, they were immoral men. Through the labors of the Methodist preachers Watters was brought to serious reflection and became an earnest penitent. "Several praying persons," he says, "who knew my distress came to visit me, and after some conversation I desired that they would pray for me. The family were called in, though it was about the middle of the day, and J. P. [Joseph Presbury, probably] gave out the hymn:

"Give to the winds thy fears,
Hope and be undismayed;
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head."

While they all joined in singing, my face was turned to the wall, with my eyes lifted upward in a flood of tears, and I felt a lively hope that the Lord whom I sought would suddenly come to His temple. My good friends sang with the Spirit and in faith. The Lord heard and appeared in the midst of us. A divine light beamed through my inmost

soul, and in a few minutes encircled me round, surpassing the brightness of the sun. My burden was gone, my sorrow fled, my soul and all that was within me rejoiced in hope of the glory of God, while I beheld such a fullness and willingness in the Lord Jesus to save lost sinners, and my soul so rested on Him that I could now for the first time call Jesus Christ Lord by the Holy Ghost. The hymn being concluded, we all fell upon our knees, but my prayers were turned into praises. A supernatural power penetrated every faculty of my soul and body." This was in May, 1771.

Having never known nor heard of any other people who professed a knowledge of what he had experienced, and having been brought into that experience through their instrumentality, Watters, of course, united with the Methodists. He "thought it a greater blessing to be received among them than to be made a prince." His conversion occurred in the same house in which he was born. There was so little Methodist preaching in Maryland then that frequently in Watters's neighborhood there was for months very little preaching. The converts, however, supplied the lack of ministerial service. "In one sense," said Watters, "we were all preachers. The visible change which sinners could not but see was a means of leading them to seek the Lord. On the Lord's Day we commonly divided into little bands, and went out into different neighborhoods wherever there was a door open to receive us—two, three, or four of our company—and would sing our hymns, read, pray, talk to the people, and some soon began to add a word of exhortation. We were weak, but we lived in a dark day, and the Lord greatly owned our labors. The little flock was of one heart and mind, and the Lord spread the leaven of his grace from heart to heart, from house to house, and from one neighborhood to another. Though our gifts were small, it was astonishing to see how rapidly the work spread all around, bearing down the little oppositions it met as chaff before the wind. Many will praise God forever for our prayer-meetings. In many neighborhoods they soon became respectable, and were considerably attended to."

Thus the cause advanced in Maryland, notwithstanding the fewness of the laborers, and thus, too, were the early Methodist preachers commonly trained for their soul-winning vocation. They became skilful in saving men by going out, as did Watters, with the experience of a new life, singing, praying, and exhorting from house to house and from one neighborhood to another. From such humble, but useful, service Watters soon advanced to the Wesleyan itinerancy. The primitive Methodist evangelists had neither the time nor the facilities for acquiring liberal culture. They were thrust forth in the Providence and by the Spirit of God into the great American evangelical field, which was white for the harvest. Their phenomenal success illustrated what Farrar has said concerning primitive Christianity: "Converts were won, not by learning or argument, but by the power of a new testimony and the spirit of a new life."* Emerson says that "in any public assembly him who has the facts, and can and will state them, people will listen to, though he is otherwise ignorant, though he is hoarse and ungraceful, though he stutters and screams."† Carlyle has said: "Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart, and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him."‡ The early Methodist preachers spoke their message from the heart. They knew the "facts" concerning salvation, and as they boldly, but persuasively, proclaimed them the people listened and were moved. What Farrar says of St. Paul's preaching was true of theirs: "What was lacking in formal syllogism or powerful declamation was more than supplied by power from on high."

Methodism early entered Delaware. In the fall of 1769 Captain Webb was in Wilmington and brought the tidings of the success of his labors there in turning people to the Lord to Philadelphia. John King went to Delaware to promote the work in the beginning of the autumn of 1770. Joseph

* F. W. Farrar's *Life and Work of St. Paul*.

† *Society and Solitude*.

‡ *Essay on Robert Burns*.

Pilmoor on April 17, 1771, says : " Having had a pressing invitation I set off in the morning for Wilmington. In the evening I found a fine congregation." The next day, April 18, 1771, he wrote : " I met with Mr. John King, the person I sent to these parts several months ago. God has made him the instrument of abundance of good to the country people." After meeting King, Mr. Pilmoor advanced to Newark, Delaware, and on the way " we called on an old disciple of Jesus," he says, " who has fitted up a place for itinerant preachers that they may turn in and refresh themselves as they travel after wandering sinners to bring them to God. We had but little time to stay ; however, we joined in praise and prayer, and were comforted of the Lord. As our way lay through New Castle, we called on Mr. Furness, a publican whose heart God has touched and made him willing to follow the friend of sinners." Concerning this " publican," Lednum, in his " History of the Rise of Methodism in America," says : " Robert Furness, who kept a public house in New Castle, was the first that received the preachers and the preaching into his house in this town. By joining the Methodists he lost his custom, and as the Court-house, which was open for balls, was closed against Methodist preachers, they preached in his tavern."

Pilmoor now proceeded to Newark, Delaware, but found " the town in confusion on account of the fair, so it was thought advisable not to preach. However," he says, " I was glad to join with a few serious people whom I found at the house where we put up. This was made a blessing to our souls. Our hearts were refreshed in waiting upon the Lord. Just as I was going down-stairs a gentlewoman called to me, who desired to have some conversation. She told me she had heard some of our preachers and wished to know what I thought of the doctrine of perfection. I told her all the perfection I hold is contained in those words of our Lord, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself.' She said, ' That is not an answer to my question.'

" ' Madam, it is such an answer as I thought proper to give, and I am sorry if you do not understand me.'

“‘Do you think we can attain to that in this life?’

“‘If not Jesus Christ has given us too hard a task. But wise master-builders begin at the foundation, and it is necessary to inquire whether we have begun there. If we have, then we must go forward with the superstructure as fast as we can, and the sooner the top-stone is brought forth with shoutings, crying, “Grace! Grace!” unto it the better.’”

In the evening of the same day Pilmoor “preached at Christeen Bridge and was greatly favored with the blessing of God.” The following day, Friday, April 19, 1771, he preached in the morning and in the afternoon and says: “The people were so devout I thought myself well rewarded in coming from Philadelphia to visit them. Rode on to New Castle and had a time of refreshing in the evening while I preached Christ Jesus the Lord. I was much fatigued when I began, but the happiness I felt in my mind soon made me forget my toil and pain.” The next day he “expounded part of the first Psalm, which was made a special blessing to the people.” He then hastened to Wilmington and preached there at noon, his text being, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us,” etc. He then went “pretty swiftly” to Philadelphia, where he arrived about nine o’clock, Saturday evening, April 20, 1771. In this itinerary of four days in Delaware he preached seven times.

Pilmoor preached to a few people at the house of a Swede at Pennypack, Pa., about eight miles from Philadelphia, December 20, 1769. He, after preaching, formed “a little society” at Pennypack, on March 26, 1770. Pilmoor preached “many times in the country as well as in the city,” in the month of January, 1770. On the third of March in that year he preached at a place twenty miles from Philadelphia. Twenty days later, when he was about leaving for his first exchange with Boardman, he asserted that he had preached at many places adjacent to Philadelphia, and that the “sacred fire” was “kindled.”

In the fore part of the year 1770, Philip Embury, the Heck family, and others removed to the interior of New York prov-

ince and formed the Ashgrove society. In April, 1770, Pilmoor preached at Jamaica, Long Island, and in the course of the same spring and in early summer he preached at Newtown, Harlem, West Chester, and elsewhere in the province of New York. He says that on June 15, 1770, Robert Williams brought good news "from the country. The work is spreading as far as New Rochelle, among some French Protestants."

Pilmoor preached in a Baptist church at Bordentown, New Jersey, on July 26, 1770. The next day he preached in the town hall at Burlington "to a fine congregation." He was at Gloucester Court-house, where the word was received "with joy" August 12, 1770. He also preached there four weeks later, and then in six more weeks he again proclaimed the living word at Gloucester. Thence onward until he returned to New York, in the ensuing November, he preached at Pennypack, near Bustleton; at White Marsh, Pa.; at Burlington, N. J., and he was also at Bordentown, Trenton, and Princeton. At Princeton, Boardman preached the seventh or eighth of November, 1770, in the college chapel.

Captain Webb formed a society in Burlington, New Jersey, December 14, 1770, and appointed Joseph Toy its leader. Mr. Toy removed soon after to Trenton, in the same province, where with three or four persons, one of whom was a man who had been a Methodist in Ireland, he met in class. The historian of Trenton says that the first man who preached the doctrines of Methodism "in Trenton was Thomas Webb. He came about 1766, and preached to the people in a stable near the corner of Green and Academy Streets. The new doctrine met at first with considerable opposition, and those who advocated it were persecuted."*

Joseph Toy, the leader of the first society in Burlington, was the first class-leader in New Jersey of whom we have knowledge. Probably, however, there was one leader, if not more, at Greenwich, in that province, where Edward Evans labored and died before Toy was appointed leader of the Burlington society by Webb. Toy became a successful itinerant preacher, and an instructor in Cokesbury College, an

* Rauns's History of Trenton, pp. 115-116.

institution which originated at the Christmas Conference that organized the Methodist Episcopal Church. In a letter written August 18, 1802, to Bishop Whatcoat, Bishop Asbury says: "Great times in Calvert; Brother Toy does well, does wonders." Later Asbury made this record: "Joseph Toy still steady, diligent, pleased the people."

Pilmoor preached at New Rochelle, New York, "to a fine congregation" May 29, 1771, in the afternoon. He "spent the evening in company with several lovers of Jesus, who seemed glad of an opportunity of speaking freely on the subject of spiritual religion." The next day after preaching again he rode to a small village, and "preached in the Huguenots' church to a congregation of decent, attentive hearers." A Mr. Abraham, "an old gentleman belonging to the Church of Holland, took me to his house," says Pilmoor, "where I was entertained with the utmost kindness and hospitality." After preaching the next day (Friday), May 31, 1771, Pilmoor rode to East Chester, where he "preached with much liberty." Then he hastened to Kingsbridge, dined, "and reached New York just in time to preach in the evening."

He started on another evangelical excursion the following Monday, June 3d, in very hot weather. He came to Cow Neck, about thirty-four miles from New York City, and in the afternoon he there met "a fine congregation," to whom he "preached with power and the word seemed to work effectually." In going to Newtown the next day he missed his way in a forest. When he arrived there he began service without delay, enjoyed a gracious season, and returned to the city.

Pilmoor went to West Chester July 15, 1771, and preached "to a small but genteel congregation" from the text, "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound," etc. He rode with his "dear friend, Mr. Theodosius Bartow, to East Chester," where he was entertained for the night very hospitably. In the morning "my friend," says Pilmoor, "accompanied me to the town of East Chester, where it was appointed for me to preach. As it was in the middle of wheat harvest I thought we should have very few to hear, but was happily disappointed. A great number of persons attended while I

preached the Gospel in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. At night I had a good time in preaching at New Rochelle, and took up my abode that night with my old and valued friend, Mr. Abraham."

Pilmoor now rode with several friends to Mr. Devou's, where he preached "the truth in love." He preached to a noble congregation at Rye, N. Y., July 18, and then returned to New Rochelle and spent the evening with Mr. Drake, a capitalist. Next morning he was accompanied by several friends in a boat to Long Island. "As the weather was calm," he says, "we united in the praises of Jehovah, and in about an hour we got safely over." He preached in the evening, and very early the next day he renewed his journey and preached at a place which he does not name at eight in the morning. Hastening on through the woods he arrived at Jamaica, where a number of New Yorkers had come to meet him. "After dinner," he says, "we had a fine congregation, and God gave His word success." They "took leave of the dear, affectionate people of Jamaica," had a most delightful journey to the ferry, and he arrived in New York about seven o'clock in the evening of Saturday, July 20, 1771, he having been absent six days in this country itinerary, in which he must have travelled more than a hundred miles, besides preaching one or more sermons every day. Two days after his return to the city he wrote that "having travelled much in the country, exposed to the sultry heat, and preached twelve times in a few days, I was glad of a little rest." Yet he soon set out for Long Island again and crossed the East River, but his progress was arrested by the heat. Concerning his failure to proceed, August 5th he says: "After dinner I crossed the ferry to Long Island, intending to preach at Newtown, but the heat was so great that no one would hire out their horses, except we would promise to pay for them if they died. This being the case, I judged it best to return to the city. For several days the weather continued so very hot that it was difficult to breathe in the sultry air, and those who were obliged to be about their business were in the utmost danger of losing their lives."

We find the aggressive itinerant preaching at Gloucester, N. J., on Sunday, September 8, 1771. The next Sunday, at Chestnut Hill, about ten miles from Philadelphia, he warned "a vast congregation" to flee from the wrath to come. After the five-o'clock preaching in Philadelphia, the first day of October, he "set off with Mr. and Mrs. Dove for Burlington," where they arrived in two hours. As there was a large congregation assembled, Pilmoor hastened to the Court-house and preached on "We know what we worship." The following day he was quite busy. "I preached," he says, "in the [Burlington] Court-house at ten, then went to dine on an Island in the Delaware with an Englishman, who has lately received an earnest desire to save his soul. We had much profitable conversation, and were very much blessed in singing and prayer. Having a desire to try Bristol, a little town in Pennsylvania, about twenty miles from the city, we all went over in a boat and I preached in the Court-house, but fear my labor was almost in vain, for the Bristol Gallios care but little for any of these things. The case was widely different in the evening while I preached in Burlington. The congregation was so large that the house was exceedingly hot, but God made it all up by his heavenly presence and power." The next day, having an appointment to preach in Philadelphia in the evening, he hastened thither "through the Jerseys, where the heat of the weather and the hot, dry sands" made travelling difficult. But his toil was not without result. A few days later Pilmoor was sent for to visit a man who was in great mental distress. "It seems," says the preacher, "he heard me preach at Burlington last week, and was so awakened that he has had no rest since."

In about a week after this evangelistic digression in New Jersey, Pilmoor made another excursion into Pennsylvania. Two men came more than twenty miles to take him to the country, and he departed with them on Friday, October 11, 1771. A considerable rain on the previous day had left the roads in bad condition. On his arrival at the place, "I found," he says, "a family of pious Welsh people who received me as if I had been a messenger from heaven. After

dinner we had a large congregation of very genteel people. The house was filled with the women, and all the men stood without waiting with the greatest attention while I declared 'the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' After preaching I had some conversation with a Baptist minister who had been one of my hearers. He thought well of my sermon, only he thought I had extended the Gospel *too far*. How wonderful that a minister of Christ should blame me for preaching the Gospel to every creature." The proclamation of free and impartial grace by the Wesleyan preachers proved a formidable hindrance to the advance of Calvinism. Pilmoor continued to dwell upon the pleasing theme on which he had preached, for, he says, when the minister had gone "I had much conversation with the family and several of their select friends about the willingness of Jesus to save." The next day he went to Methacton, and as the chapel would not nearly contain the congregation he preached in the wood.

The next day, Sunday, October 13, 1771, Pilmoor preached in a grove at Chestnut Hill, and he had reason to believe that the Word fell with saving effect upon many of the people. Two days later, as we shall see, he preached the funeral sermon of Edward Evans in the chapel at Greenwich, N. J., where Evans had ministered. He performed that service at the request of "the heads of the congregation" of Greenwich.

From Pilmoor's narrative it appears that Evans became identified with the Methodists about the time Pilmoor and Boardman came. He preached the Wesleyan doctrines in New Jersey as early, probably, as the year 1770. He became the minister of the church at Greenwich several months before his lamented death. The following obituary record concerning this saintly preacher was made by Pilmoor in October, 1771: "Immediately upon my arrival at home, my housekeeper told me of the death of my ever dear and venerable friend, Mr. Edward Evans. He was savingly converted to God about thirty years ago, under the ministry of that precious man of God, Mr. Whitefield, and has maintained an unspotted character from the beginning. When Providence brought

Mr. Boardman and me to America, he united with us most heartily, and was made a most useful instrument among us. As he frequently went into the Jerseys to preach, the people were exceedingly fond of him, built a pretty chapel, and insisted upon having him for their minister. After he had been with them a few months he took the fall fever, which soon brought him to his grave. As he lived, so he died, full of faith and full of obedient love."

The day before that on which Pilmoor preached Mr. Evans's funeral sermon at Greenwich, he preached a discourse in Philadelphia with reference to the sorrowful event of his departure. "Monday, October 14," says Pilmoor, "we had a crowded church to hear the funeral sermon, which I preached from the text, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' The people were deeply affected and seemed as if they were determined to follow the example of Edward Evans as he followed Christ, that they might die in the Lord like him."

From the several references to Mr. Evans and his ministry in Pilmoor's Journal, it is clear that he was the possessor of a devout and loving spirit, a good preacher, a friend and useful coadjutor of the first Wesleyan missionaries in this country, and the devoted and beloved pastor of the first Methodist society that worshipped in a meeting-house in New Jersey. His name repeatedly appears in our narrative in connection with his labors. He preached on several occasions in Philadelphia, as we have seen, and was highly esteemed as a minister of Christ. Though hitherto unknown to the great Methodist Church of America, he will henceforth receive recognition as a blameless and interesting character, and especially as the first American Methodist preacher.

It appears that the title of the Greenwich chapel was not vested in any denomination. We learn from the researches of the late Rev. Garner R. Snyder, of New Jersey, that this chapel was located at Berkley, near the present village of Clarksboro, and that it was called Greenwich after the name of the township. The chapel, says Mr. Snyder, "was in charge of seven managers, who met June 30, 1774, and de-

cided that," as it appeared to them, "'it would be for the advantage of religion and piety that the said Church be the property of some one denomination or sect of Christians, and as it appears from the subscription paper that by far the greater part of the money laid out on the building was given by members of the Church of England, and still desire that this may be an established Church, we therefore agree that it shall be so.' This action evidently was resisted, and to calm the troubled waters a committee was appointed to decide who should be admitted to and who excluded from the pulpit. It was also decided that the money paid should be refunded to such as claimed to be dissatisfied. But too many were dissatisfied, and this offer was modified so as to mean anyone who would say he did not give it for the Church of England, but for a Methodist meeting-house. September 13, 1774, Thomas Rankin, then General Assistant, and other prominent Methodists met the managers, and it was finally agreed that the regulation made by the managers shall be observed by each party."

Of the seven managers of the chapel two were Methodists. "The two Methodist managers," says Mr. Snyder, "soon withdrew from the board, and the fact that it was decided that there should be no private meetings for divine service held in said church implies the existence of a class, and the purpose to prevent the continuance of its meetings in the church. The society being thus driven out soon erected a small frame building near by, which after a few years was moved to Clonmell, near Gibbstown, where it remained a place of worship for many years, the site of which is yet marked by an old deserted graveyard." Mr. Snyder derived nearly all of the above facts from the Register of St. Paul's Church, Clarksboro, N. J., "the successor of the Greenwich Church." Such was the history of the first preaching-house of the Methodists in New Jersey.

We have now seen in some degree the outspread of Methodism in America prior to the arrival of Mr. Asbury. From lack of data we are not able to perceive all that was done by Williams and King in different parts of the country

in the same period, yet we have seen them sufficiently in their travels and ministry to know that they scattered the seed of the kingdom widely and effectually in America, before Asbury crossed the Atlantic. Furthermore, it is altogether probable that Boardman's labors in America in the two years preceding the coming of Asbury were not wholly confined to Philadelphia and New York, but that, like Pilmoor, he, as he had opportunity, went forth into the highways of the country to spread the good tidings. We have in Pilmoor's narrative evidence that Boardman insisted upon maintaining the itinerancy with respect to frequent exchanges, for Pilmoor at times removed from one city to the other when he desired to remain longer. But Boardman *would* change three or four times a year. Therefore it is fair to conclude that with such views of the itinerancy, Boardman's voice was heard in the country regions from time to time. We have in this chapter proof of Pilmoor's activity in country itineraries from the beginning of the year 1770 until he met and welcomed Asbury upon his arrival in America at Philadelphia. So far as Pilmoor was concerned, at any rate, the record of his itinerant work in different parts of the land, before Asbury arrived, which has just been brought under review, sufficiently corrects the assumption that he seldom preached to rural communities, and that it was Asbury's office to thrust his predecessors in the American field out of the cities into the country. There is no evidence that the more extensive travels of Pilmoor and Boardman, after Asbury came, were undertaken at his instance, but as we shall quickly see there is evidence to the contrary. The reinforcement of the work by two additional missionaries gave to those already here more time to labor in the country, an opportunity which they well improved.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARRIVAL OF FRANCIS ASBURY.

AN almost epochal event in American ecclesiastical history occurred October 27, 1771. On that day there appeared in Philadelphia, fresh from England, a young Wesleyan preacher, who was destined to become the leader of Methodism in the New World; who was to be identified fully with it throughout his life, and who was to guide and impel it with such skilful and forceful generalship as should insure its outspread over the American Republic and much of Canada; and who, in securing to it a singularly compact and powerful organization, was to render it one of the most aggressive and victorious evangelical forces of Christendom. Francis Asbury was not in every particular always the ideal man, informed at all times with the highest wisdom, and totally free from self-intrusion; yet, undoubtedly, he was one of the saintliest and mightiest religious propagandists of his time in this country, and of greater value to it than its wealthiest city or its richest mine of gold. While as a historian I shall not be able in every instance to accord praise to his acts and words, nevertheless the truth of history will compel me to claim for him one of the highest niches, if not the highest, in the temple of American Christianity.

Asbury himself sketched the prominent events of his early history. Of his birth he says: "I was born in Old England, near the foot of Hampstead Bridge, about four miles from Birmingham in Staffordshire, and according to the best of my after knowledge, on the 20th or 21st day of August, 1745." He was the only son of his parents, and his father desired him to remain in school, "he cared not how

long"; but the beatings he received aroused in the boy "such horrible dread" of the pedagogue as caused him to prefer anything to school. He was religiously impressed in childhood and says that he "felt something of God as early as the age of seven." When about fifteen, "the Word of God," he writes, "made deep impression upon my heart, which brought me to Jesus Christ, who graciously justified my guilty soul through faith in his precious blood. About sixteen I experienced a marvellous display of the Grace of God, which some might think was full sanctification, and, indeed, I was very happy, though in an ungodly family. At about seventeen I began to hold some public meetings, and between seventeen and eighteen began to exhort and to preach. At twenty-one I travelled much, and in the beginning of my twenty-second year I travelled altogether. I was nine months in Staffordshire and adjoining shires, two years in Bedfordshire circuit, and two in Salisbury circuit."*

For six months anterior to the session of the English Conference, in August, 1771, Asbury had "strong intimations" within him that he should go to America. He took it to the Lord, "and at the Conference, when it was proposed that some preachers should go over to the American continent," he says, "I spoke my mind and made an offer of myself. I was accepted by Mr. Wesley and others, who judged I had a call."† From the Conference Asbury went to see his parents, and as gently as possible he informed them of his design. They sorrowfully acquiesced. His father, whom he seldom, if ever, saw weep until this crisis, "was overwhelmed with tears, with grief. He cried out, 'I shall never see him again,' " a prophecy which proved true. "My mother," says Asbury, "was one of the tenderest parents in the world, but I believe she was blessed with Divine assistance to part with me." The wrench sustained by his own heart in leaving his parents—their only living child—to see them no more in life, he, nearly thirty years afterward, adverted to as "a wounded memory."

* Asbury's Journal, Vol. I., pp. 120-122, and Vol. II., p. 257.

† Ibid., Vol. I., p. 11.

His mother was a woman of exalted character though in humble life. Her son said of her, that "for fifty years her hands, her house, and her heart were open to receive the people of God and ministers of Christ, and thus a lamp was lighted up in a dark place called Great Barre, in Great Britain. She was an afflicted yet most active woman, of quick bodily powers and masculine understanding; nevertheless, 'so kindly were the elements mixed in her,' that her strong mind quickly felt the subduing influences of that Christian sympathy which 'weeps with those who weep.' As a woman and a wife she was modest, blameless. As a mother (above all the women in the world would I claim her for my own), ardently affectionate. As a mother in Israel, few of her sex have done more by a holy walk to live, and by personal labor to support the Gospel and to wash the Saint's feet. As a friend she was generous, true, and constant." Mrs. Asbury's Christian name was Elizabeth. She died full of years and virtues, January 6, 1802, having attained to the great age of eighty-six or eighty-seven.

Asbury says of his father that had he been as saving as he was laborious he might have been wealthy. He was employed as farmer and gardener to two wealthy families.* For about thirty-nine years he had the Gospel preached in his house. In 1798 "he died happy."

Richard Wright was appointed to America also and awaited Asbury at Bristol. On September 4, 1771, they sailed from a port near that city. Their voyage did not end until the twenty-seventh of the following month, when they entered Philadelphia. It was the Sabbath and Pilmoor says: "We had a time of love in the morning. In the afternoon, Messrs. Asbury and Wright arrived from England to help us in the great work of the Lord. We had long prayed for and expected them, and now I trust the Lord will be with them, and make his face to shine on all their labors." They were

* Francis Asbury was apprenticed when about thirteen, and served at his calling about six and a half years. The Rev. Alexander McCaine was a travelling companion of Bishop Asbury, and McCaine in his *Organization and Early History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, p. 113, asserts that Asbury "went to learn the trade of a button maker."

kindly entertained at the house of Francis Harris, "who brought us to a large Church," says Asbury, "where we met with a considerable congregation. Brother Pilmoor preached. The people looked on us with pleasure, bidding us welcome with fervent affection, and receiving us as angels of God." He adds: "I feel that God is here and find plenty of all we need."

This was quite different from the entrance of Pilmoor and Boardman into Philadelphia two years previously. They walked the streets of the strange city not knowing there were Methodists there, and intended to proceed to New York to find their work and receive their welcome, when they were accosted by and taken to the house of an Irish Wesleyan, who had seen Boardman in Ireland. Contrasting their own arrival with that of Asbury and Wright, Pilmoor remarked: "When Mr. Boardman and I arrived here we had but few to take notice of us or show us any kindness. Now there are many hundreds in Philadelphia who wish us success in the name of the Lord." Pilmoor was very fraternal toward the new missionaries, and on the day following their arrival he says he "spent a great part of the day in introducing the preachers to all my particular friends in the city, and rejoice to see them so well received."

The second evening after his arrival Asbury opened his ministry in America in the city of Philadelphia. This historical fact is not mentioned in his journal, nor does he give any information concerning his movements during his first week in this country. This lack, however, is supplied somewhat by Pilmoor who on October 28, 1771, says: "We had a fine congregation to hear Mr. Asbury. He preached with a degree of freedom and the word seemed to be attended with life."

The second day after his arrival in Philadelphia, Asbury accompanied Pilmoor to the only chapel which the Methodists then occupied in New Jersey, the society at which were in grief for the death of Mr. Evans. On that occasion, October 29, 1771, Pilmoor says: "Mr. Asbury went with me to Grinage [Greenwich] chapel, where I preached to a fine attentive audience on the barren fig-tree. The poor, distressed

people seemed to receive the word with gladness and thought themselves much obliged by the visit we paid them. After preaching I called upon my dear friend, Mrs. Evans, whom I found much better. The Lord has wonderfully supported her under the sharp trial of losing her beloved husband." Of the desire to hear Methodist preaching in that early day, an example was furnished by a woman whom the two preachers overtook while on their way back from Greenwich. She "had walked fourteen miles that morning with her child in her arms to hear the sermon, and was to return that night."

Richard Wright preached in Philadelphia on the first Sunday morning after his arrival with Asbury. "The people seemed to be pretty well satisfied with his matter," says Pilmoor, "and as to his manner he will easily improve." The next night, November 4, 1771, the preachers held a watch meeting. In the primitive period of Methodism this special service was observed not only on the last night of a year, but on other nights also. Pilmoor preached at five in the morning, and at eight in the evening he opened the watch meeting with a sermon. Asbury says "the people attended with great seriousness." Asbury and Wright "exhorted," says Pilmoor, "and we continued in prayer and praise until midnight." "Very few people left the room," Asbury says, "till the conclusion; toward the end a plain man spoke who came out of the country, and his words went with great power to the souls of the people." The next evening Asbury preached and he says: "This also was a night of power to my own and many other souls."

Asbury departed for New York to join Boardman on the sixth of November, 1771; Asbury says he left Philadelphia on the *seventh*, but it is apparent from the context in his Journal that this date was not accurate. For some ensuing days his dates are one day in advance of the time. Pilmoor's dates at that time are correct. He says, November 6th: "Mr. Asbury took the Burlington stage for New York to assist Mr. Boardman, and I trust he will be a special instrument in the hands of God in turning many to righteousness."

It was the privilege of Pilmoor to see an abundant reali-

zation of this devout hope, for he was living and preaching in Philadelphia when Asbury ceased from his apostolic labors. From the day that he in that city welcomed Asbury to the field where he was to toil and suffer and die, until Asbury's ascension to the heavens, Pilmoor was a witness of his laborious and wonderfully fruitful career.

On his way to New York Asbury preached in the Court-house at Burlington, and also twice in the house of Peter van Pelt, whom he met on his journey and who invited him to his home on Staten Island. Asbury preached also at the house of a Justice Wright on the same Island. He reached New York November 11, 1771, and "found Richard Boardman in peace, but weak in body." The next day he opened his ministry in that metropolis by preaching to a large congregation on "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." He found the people "loving and serious, and in some of them a love of discipline." Furthermore, he declared "I know the life and power of religion is here." "My friend Boardman," he says, "is a kind, loving, worthy man, truly amiable and entertaining, and of a childlike temper." He was very favorably impressed with what he saw in the New York society. "I think," he says, "the Americans are more ready to receive the word than the English. To see the poor negroes so affected is pleasing; to see their sable countenances in our solemn assemblies, and to hear them sing with cheerful melody their Redeemer's praise affected me much."

Asbury, however, did not long remain content with the conduct of the work. Nine days after he entered New York, and twenty-three days after he arrived in America, he wrote: "I remain in New York though unsatisfied with our being both in town together. I have not yet the thing which I seek—a circulation of the preachers to avoid partiality and popularity. However, I am fixed in the Methodist plan, and do what I do faithfully as to God. I expect trouble is at hand. This I expected when I left England, and I am willing to suffer, yea to die sooner than to betray so good a cause by any means. It will be a hard matter to stand against all op-

position as an iron pillar strong and steadfast as a wall of brass." Why should this young man, who was yet but a stranger in America, have spoken thus? The preachers who preceded him here had displayed thorough devotion to the work, and had established it permanently in two of the chief centres of population and commerce besides planting it in rural places. They had maintained a rapid circulation of the preachers, Boardman and Pilmoor themselves having alternated at short intervals between Philadelphia and New York. When Pilmoor greeted and welcomed Asbury in Philadelphia, he had spent two and a half months of his fourth term in that city, and had already completed three terms of labor in New York. Boardman likewise had served three terms in Philadelphia and had almost completed three months of his fourth term in New York, when Asbury joined him there. Asbury, on the contrary, had stayed two years in each of his last two circuits in England. As soon as Williams was set free from John Street by Boardman's arrival in New York, he started for Maryland, where he evidently spent the winter of 1769-70, and then in the spring returned to the northern portion of the field. Early in the summer following Williams again departed to Maryland. We have seen how widely Webb travelled and preached from the beginning—being first in New York and Long Island, then in New Jersey, Philadelphia, Wilmington, and, as there is some reason to believe, in Maryland also. Then we have seen Robert Strawbridge away from his Maryland home, and as early as January 14, 1770, preaching in Philadelphia. Edward Evans, too, had itinerated, and had left Philadelphia to minister in a rural community in New Jersey, where he died. In view of the rapid movements of the Wesleyan itinerants here for the two years preceding the coming of Asbury, some of his utterances made almost immediately after his arrival seem nearly inexplicable, such for instance as "I have not yet the thing which I seek—a circulation of the preachers."

Only two days after he wrote the above passage, Asbury indited the following notable paragraph: "At present I am dissatisfied. I judge we are to be shut up in the cities this

winter. My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I will show them the way. I am in trouble, and more trouble is at hand, for I am determined to make a stand against all partiality. I have nothing to seek but the glory of God; nothing to fear but His displeasure. I am come over with an upright intention, and through the grace of God I will make it appear. I am determined that no man shall bias me with soft words and fair speeches, nor will I ever fear (the Lord helping me) the face of man or know any man after the flesh, if I beg my bread from door to door."

What was the purpose of such bold, not to say defiant, utterances? Did Asbury demand that the cities should be abandoned after all the devoted labor that had been bestowed upon them, and the flocks that had been gathered there be left without shepherds? It seems scarcely possible that he could have been so rash as to propose such a course. If the cities were to be adequately cared for, two men would be required for the service. We have seen that large and deeply interested congregations had assembled during the preceding two years in New York and Philadelphia, and Asbury himself has asserted that in 1771 (the year of his arrival) there were "about 300 Methodists in New York, and 250 in Philadelphia."* Besides, as the outcome of much earnest effort and considerable pecuniary outlay, the young and struggling society in each of those cities possessed a house of worship and both structures were in debt. Could Asbury have thought it wise or even justifiable to leave those churches, with their large congregations and considerable membership, without regular ministerial service? If he did not think so, why should he have spoken so deprecatingly about the unwillingness of the preachers to leave the cities, and of his personal intention to show them the way to do it?

Asbury undoubtedly was precipitate in forming his conclusions respecting the conduct of the work in America. "Wait and see" is a good maxim for a beginner in any sphere of action. Asbury's zeal was ardent, but in this instance it was not guided by knowledge. His attachment to the cause

* See Asbury's Journal, Vol. III., p. 121.

he had come to serve was strong, but that did not justify his hasty and bold assumption of superiority in wisdom and authority over Boardman and Pilmoor, who were his seniors in years and in office and his superiors in culture and knowledge of the field. Boardman, not Asbury, was then by appointment of Mr. Wesley in charge of the American work, yet it would seem from these remarkable utterances of his that Asbury conceived that its direction now largely devolved upon himself. The disturbance in both New York and Philadelphia, which, as we shall see, arose soon after Asbury's insistence upon the acceptance of his ideas respecting the disposition of the work, seems to indicate that he proceeded as if he were chief in authority.

The spirit of rulership which was thus displayed by him was inherent in the man. The Rev. Devereux Jarratt, rector of Bath Episcopal parish in Virginia, was a minister of positive religious character and burning zeal, who, as we shall soon see, labored with and for the Methodists in that province. He was very friendly with Asbury, who bore ample testimony to Jarratt's worth and usefulness, and preached a memorial sermon on Jarratt's character and labors upon the occasion of his death. Jarratt had good opportunity to know Asbury, having received him again and again into his house. He bore testimony to Asbury's diligence in labor, but he discovered in him a disposition to be chief, which disposition we have just seen manifested so early in his American career. When Asbury was close to his thirty-fifth birthday, Jarratt, in a letter of the date of August 2, 1780, said of him: "Mr. Asbury is the most indefatigable man in his travels and variety of labors of any I am acquainted with; and though his strong passion for superiority and thirst for domination may contribute not a little to this, yet I hope he is chiefly influenced by more laudable motives." * This "strong passion for superiority and thirst for domination" largely explains some of his procedures after he arrived in America. There is no cause to doubt his Christian sincerity, however, nor that his spirit of generalship which he so soon displayed here,

* Jarratt's Life, written by himself in a series of letters.

became in its sanctified exercise a chief force in his development as one of the mightiest ecclesiastical chieftains, if not, indeed, the mightiest that has appeared in America. In the first weeks of his ministry here, that spirit was not sufficiently controlled by the wisdom which guided it in Asbury's later life. Thirty years subsequently, just after he had held a Conference in New York, Bishop Asbury uttered the following words which are applicable here: "Ah! the half is not told of the passions, parties, hopes, and fears of the best of men through ignorance and mistake." *

Asbury kept himself in the cities and the regions adjacent for some time. In itinerating considerably about New York and Philadelphia for several months after his arrival, he labored chiefly in places where the ground had already been broken by Webb, Pilmoor, and Williams, and probably also by Boardman. In the fall of 1771, and in the winter following, he preached in West Chester, East Chester, West Farms, New Rochelle, Rye, Mamaroneck, Staten Island, Amboy, Spotswood, and Burlington, and in the spring of 1772 he preached at New Castle, Wilmington, Chester, Greenwich, Trenton, etc. In most of these places, and in others besides, Pilmoor had preached in advance of Asbury's arrival, and so probably had Boardman. In April, 1772, Asbury reached Bohemia Manor, in the northern part of Maryland, but he quickly turned northward, and in five days he was back in Philadelphia. While in Maryland he said, "I have had serious thoughts of going to Baltimore; but the distance, which is ninety miles, seems too much at present." He did not go to Baltimore until he had been in America more than a year.

Asbury apparently did not attain to any notable degree of popularity in New York or Philadelphia at the beginning of his ministry in those cities. His autograph letters written soon after his coming show, in comparison with original epistles written by Boardman and Pilmoor near to the same time, that in culture he was inferior to his predecessors. He did not possess the eloquence of Pilmoor, and probably he was surpassed by Boardman in the pulpit. He, however,

* Asbury's Journal, Vol. III., p. 69.

was studious, and increased his store of knowledge and, no doubt, improved his preaching. Mr. Snethen said of Asbury : “ When we deduct the time taken up in travelling and preaching and superintending the general work, and those intervals when acute or chronic disease disqualified him for study, we are led to wonder when he could have found time to improve his mind, but improve it he certainly did, and in no common degree.” More than twenty years after he began his American ministry his close and trusted friend, John Dickens, while defending him against the aspersions that had been cast upon him by William Hammett, said : “ If Mr. Asbury sought the applause of men, and was jealous lest others should eclipse him in a public character, he never would have, as he oftentimes has, permitted preachers to travel with him for weeks and months together, who have far exceeded him in the judgment of the populace as public speakers.” * Asbury’s greatness chiefly lay in his capacity for developing, leading, and governing the Methodist itinerant forces in America. His vigorous intellect, deep devotion to the cause, and his unfailing religious ardor and enthusiasm made him also an impressive and a successful preacher, notwithstanding several of his early American co-laborers surpassed him in rhetorical skill and vocal expression.

The Rev. Nicholas Snethen was one of Asbury’s travelling companions and was called his “ silver trumpet.” Snethen preached and published a memorial sermon on Bishop Asbury after his death, in which he thus portrayed him : “ If the saying ‘ he was born to govern ’ is true of any human being it might be truly applied to him. Those with whom he came in contact could not but feel the authority of his spirit. His talent was almost wholly executive. In a judicial or legislative capacity he seemed not to excel. It cannot be concealed that he was not incapable of the exercise of that awful attribute of power, hard-heartedness, to those individuals, feelings and interests which seemed to oppose the execution of public plans. Constantly in the habit of making the

* Friendly Remarks on the Proceedings of the Rev. Mr. Hammett, to which is annexed a letter addressed to himself. By John Dickins. Philadelphia, 1792.

greatest personal sacrifices to the public good, his mind would not balance between the obligations of duty and the accommodation or convenience of others. He was a vigilant ruler or overseer. He neither slumbered nor slept upon his post. His was the mind to discern and the will to command. As the result of much careful and even critical investigation our judgment is deliberately made up, and we do not hesitate to declare that so far as good intentions, good motives, and good endeavors could make him such, he was a good bishop."

Asbury could not conceal his constitutional traits, some of which, perhaps, were infirmities, and at times obscured in a degree his exalted character. His love and practice of whatsoever things are pure, true, lovely, and of good report, and his ceaseless devotion to prayer, developed him into lowly and yet lofty saintship. He was a great Christian. This was the uniform testimony of his closest intimates. In his memorial sermon on Asbury, preached in 1816, Nicholas Snethen said: "Of all the missionaries Mr. Wesley sent to this country, might we not admit that the young Francis Asbury may have been the most ambitious? What are the fruits and effects of it? Has it not enabled him to bear the burden and heat of the day? Has it not enabled him to labor more abundantly than all his fellow-missionaries? If the tree is to be known by its fruits, or a principle by its consequences, may we not infer that an ambition productive of such effects could not have been of a criminal nature?"

"He was made good by the grace of God. His religion was evangelical and experimental. His repentance was not confined to the practice of sin, but extended to the nature and principle of it, which the pure and holy law of God disclosed to his view in his fallen spirit. His faith was saving; his confidence in the Redeemer of his soul was strong, steady, and unshaken. He was born of God and received the Spirit of adoption, which bore witness with his spirit that he was a child of God. Grace wrought effectually in him both to will and to do. Much of his clearness of perception and expression, for which he was remarkable on the subject of an experimental religion, proceeded from the strong and distinct con-

sciousness he had of the work of God in his own soul. His experience was as temperate as it was pure. In his utmost fervor he showed no symptoms of wildness, nor flightiness of imagination.

“He seemed to know the first bounds of religious feeling and to possess ability to keep within them. Though the subject of experience made a part of all his discourses, and he was charitable almost to excess of the experience of others, he rarely, if ever, dwelt upon the peculiar workings of his own heart. Never, perhaps, has religious experience appeared in any individual less liable to exception, or challenged more universal confidence. Who that knew the man ever doubted the reality and sincerity of his experience? He was morally good. His religion was practical; he walked worthy of the vocation wherewith he was called; his conversation was such as becometh the Gospel. He was blameless and harmless of the vices and follies of the age in which he lived. He was temperate in all things, in meat, drink, and apparel; not greedy of filthy lucre; not a lover of money; not a lover of this world; not proud. In regard to his passions, neither his friends nor his enemies had cause for pity or reproach. There is reason to believe that at an early period, like a man of God, he submitted to the admonition, ‘Flee also youthful lusts.’ In manners he showed an uncorruptness, sincerity, gravity; he was an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in spirit. There was a manliness about his morality which gave it a peculiar fitness to his profession and station. Nothing seemed squeamish or sickly in his whole moral temperament. So strong and distinct were the features of his moral character that it was almost hazardous to attempt a description of them. They possessed the identity of the man. His practical religion was like a luminous path shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

“In devotion he affected no concealment; he was professedly and habitually devout. In this part of his character there was nothing doubtful. Devotion raised him above himself and obscured his infirmities. His prayers on all occasions, in the estimation of his friends, exceeded any compo-

sitions of the kind they had ever heard or read. While they had all the perspicuity of studied, written discourse, they seemed to possess the fitness of inspiration to the persons and the subject for whom they were offered up. Those who heard him daily were surprised and delighted with his seemingly inexhaustible fund of devotional matter. It is difficult to conceive how any man could come up nearer to that precept 'Pray without ceasing.'

"When the toilsome season of the annual Conferences was over, and he entered upon the daily course of travelling and preaching, with a tolerable state of health, his friends found him all that they wished him to be. As a road companion no man could be more agreeable; he was cheerful almost to gayety; his conversation was sprightly, and sufficiently seasoned with wit and anecdote. His manners and disposition in every family were all suavity and sweetness. The light of goodness seemed to shine around him; the eyes of all that saw him helped him; the young and the old emulated each other in showing him tokens of respect and love. These were seasons sacred to peace and happiness, to love and friendship—when piety, purity, and humility consecrated the heart for their enjoyment. It was on one of these pleasing occasions, at the house of one of the members of a family who had long been dear to him, in an evening party, that we recollect to have heard one of his most happy effusions from 'They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.' The easy and sublime flight of that majestic bird was no unfit emblem of the operations of his genius and piety in that charming discourse.

"Not only did he enliven these social intercourses with his sermons, his prayers, and his conversations, but with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, which his fine voice, together with the grace of his heart, rendered peculiarly attractive. How often has he made these lines thrill through our heart:

" 'Far above the glorious ceiling
Of yon azure-vaulted sky
Jesus sits, his love revealing
To his splendid troops on high.'

And again :

“ ‘ I cannot, I cannot forbear
These passionate longings for home ;
O when will my spirit be there ?
O when will the messenger come ? ’

“ The bishop may be forgotten, or faintly remembered, but evergreens will grow and bloom perennially around the memory of the man, the Christian, and the able minister of the New Testament.

“ He was a good preacher ; he was a better preacher than he was generally supposed to be. The extent of his pulpit resources was not generally known. No one could know them who was not in the habit of hearing him daily. He was master of the science of his profession. He knew the original languages of his Bible. His mind was stored with the opinions of the most eminent Biblical critics and commentators. He was mighty in the Scriptures, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. He was what is called an orthodox preacher ; his faith in the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ never wavered. He held fast the form of sound words that was delivered unto him. He was a practical preacher, never metaphysical or speculative ; never wild and visionary ; never whining and fastidious. No exception would be taken to the general purity and dignity of his language. His enunciation was excellent. ‘ The clear and mellow bass of his deep voice ’ never failed him. In this respect he appeared to peculiar advantage, not only in the pulpit, but in the execution of the functions of his office. Who ever heard him in the office of ordination say ‘ Take thou authority,’ that did not feel the authority of his voice ?

“ But though his pulpit exhibitions were the admiration and delight of those who heard him the most frequently, yet it must be admitted that he was not in general so edifying to strangers. This was owing in part to his laconic and sententious style, and the frequent concealment of his method, and in part also to his impatience of minuteness and detail,

which was always heightened by the pressure of disease. He belonged to that class of teachers who are said to wear well ; the oftener they are heard the better they are liked."

Such was Francis Asbury, the beginning of whose great career as the foremost character and chieftain of American Methodism we have just contemplated. The delineation of his character by Nicholas Snethen is probably the most accurate and just that has been drawn by any pen. Mr. Snethen was his travelling companion in the closing part of the eighteenth and in the early part of the nineteenth century, when Asbury was about midway between fifty and sixty years of age, and thus Snethen had opportunity to hear him often, to converse freely with him, and to study him day by day.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM ASBURY'S ARRIVAL UNTIL THE DEPARTURE OF PILMOOR TO THE SOUTH.

AFTER the arrival of Asbury and Wright, Pilmoor continued his labors in Philadelphia until the 23d of the ensuing December. Slavery in the society was brought specially to his notice after his Sunday morning sermon, November 10, 1771, by a letter from a colored man that was delivered to him. In part it ran thus: "These lines are to acquaint you that my bondage is such I cannot possibly attend with the rest of the class to receive my ticket; therefore beg that you will send it. I wanted much to come to the church at the watch-night, but could not get leave. But I bless God that I was greatly favored with the spirit of prayer, and enjoyed much of the divine presence. I find the enemy of my soul continually trying to throw me off the foundation, but I have that within me which bids defiance to his delusive snares. I beg an interest in your prayers that I may be able to bear up under all my difficulties with patient resignation to the will of God." Only a few thousand negroes were at any time held in bondage in Pennsylvania. A considerable part of those probably were in Philadelphia, which was then the largest city on the continent and the centre of the wealth, commerce, and luxury of Pennsylvania. It is apparent that, as was the case in New York, slaves were included in the Philadelphia Methodist Society from a very early period. "It must be recorded to the lasting honor of Pennsylvania that she was the first of the thirteen colonies to abolish slavery. This was done, under the administration of President Reed, in 1780."

Pilmoor, having long desired to preach at Germantown,

rode thither and preached at two o'clock on Sunday afternoon, November 10, 1771. "A fine congregation received the word as from the Lord." In the evening he preached "to a prodigious crowd" in Philadelphia, when "our hearts," he says, "were bowed before Jehovah while I explained and enforced, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' What an awful thought is this! A flaming world. Dissolving elements. The Lord descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God. Rocks rending! Graves opening! The dead rising! Ten thousand worlds assembling before the Son of Man!"

This sermon was not unfruitful. The preacher informs us that two days after its delivery two ladies visited him, who told him that they were educated Roman Catholics, but had been greatly alarmed in hearing the discourse. The following Sunday, November 17th, he preached in the city in the morning, and then proceeded to Chestnut Hill, where he preached in a wood "to a vast concourse gathered from all quarters." Pilmoor's popularity in Philadelphia was attested by the serious crowds that assembled to hear him. On this same Sunday he asserted that he had preached "many hundreds of sermons in this city, yet the people are as eager to hear as ever. I am fully assured by undeniable fact that the longer I stay among them, the more numerous are the congregations and the more deeply serious." He enjoyed preaching in Philadelphia, and sometimes felt a decided repugnance to tearing himself away. He did not believe that removals at short intervals were helpful to the work, but on the contrary he says, "I find constant changes are upon the whole hurtful in this city as well as in New York." He and Boardman did not exchange fields after their arrival for five months, but afterward they exchanged six times in fifteen months before the arrival of Asbury. Pilmoor spent two years in his last circuit before he came over the Atlantic, and why such an extreme form of the itinerancy should have been practised by him and Boardman here is not clearly

apparent. Notwithstanding the frequent removal of the preachers from one city to the other their labors were fruitful. Pilmoor found, from numerous conversations with principal citizens late in the fall of 1771, that they were heartily friendly to the Wesleyan cause. "They now believe our design is good," he says, "and are therefore glad to encourage us. While we continue to walk prudently there is no doubt but that we shall do well in Philadelphia."

Pilmoor was attentive to all the departments of his charge. On the eighteenth of November he gave the forenoon to visiting the sick, which he says "is very profitable employment for a minister"; the same day he gave attention to pastoral discipline by "examining into the character of one of the society who had been accused of immorality." His method was to bring "the persons face to face." He found "there was nothing but a general charge without foundation." The same day he admitted two members into the society, and had the two Catholic ladies who shortly before had visited him, speak with him again.

The first Sunday of December, 1771, Pilmoor preached in Philadelphia and also in the Lutheran Church at Germantown. Two days later he "dined in company with a Lutheran minister who is a choice man of God and zealous for the advancement of true religion in the world." Pilmoor had suffered "great anxiety on account of hearing nothing from Mr. Boardman." On the ninth of the above-named month he received a letter from New York which informed him that Boardman had decided upon another exchange. While he was rejoiced to hear from his colleague, he wondered why he should wish to change in the winter, although the previous winter they exchanged when Pilmoor had his hard winter journey to Philadelphia. Probably he thought that a repetition of such a journey was not desirable, nor, if not necessary, allowable. "I submit," he says, "and I hope God will give me patience under this and every trial I meet with in the discharge of my duty." The next day Mr. Harris started for New York in a chaise to convey Boardman to Philadelphia. On the eighteenth of December Pilmoor saw many persons

from the country who desired him to visit them. "The longer I stay here," he says, "the more the work is laid out for me. God is opening a great and effectual door for his gospel, and the dear people in all parts where I go are eagerly desirous of hearing the word of life." Three days later he was visited by some young Quakers, and was gratified that he had an opportunity "of conversing freely with them of the things of God." Boardman arrived in Philadelphia on the twenty-first of December, 1771, just before the hour for preaching, and, says Pilmoor, "we concluded the day together in peace."

The next morning (Sunday) Pilmoor went to White Marsh in disagreeable weather and over very bad roads, where he preached to a congregation that fully filled the church. Returning the same day to Philadelphia he at six o'clock preached his "farewell sermon." He did not in this instance enjoy that radical form of itinerancy to which he was subject. His removal from Philadelphia when his usefulness there and in the adjacent regions was so manifest did not accord with his heart nor his judgment. Of this he writes, "The people in general receive my message as from God, and my way is perfectly open and clear. At present I have a most delightful prospect of doing good, not only in the city, but also in all the country round about, as the churches of Episcopalians, Lutherans, Swedes, and Presbyterians are open to me, and vast multitudes attend the word and seem to embrace it; yet, I must go and leave them. Mr. Boardman wants to be here, and I must submit. This is rather trying, not to leave this place, but to leave the work at this time, when God is so manifestly working by me. However, it is not my doing. I hope it will not be laid to my charge. May God give his blessing to my dear fellow laborer, and crown him with more abundant success." Notwithstanding Pilmoor did not always enjoy Boardman's plan of frequent exchanges, he did not refuse compliance when his superior in office insisted upon making them, and they preserved throughout their peaceful and affectionate relations.

Pilmoor departed for New York December 23, 1771. "As

Mr. Boardman was so urgent," he says, "I went to two or three places to take leave of my friends, and about two o'clock left Philadelphia. Several of my select friends were a good deal dissatisfied at the manner in which I was hurried away, and resolved to accompany me as far as Burlington. They hired a coach, and Messrs. Wallace, Dowers, Salter, and Coates set off with me for Bristol, and we got to Burlington just in time to preach. The congregation was large and deeply serious."

The farewells were spoken the next day; Pilmoor's friends returned in the coach to Philadelphia, and he on a hired horse rode forward to New York. The frost on this twenty-fourth of December was the sharpest he had ever known. He graphically describes his winter journey: "I was in the utmost danger of being frozen, and was obliged to run on foot to prevent it. And even then my fingers would frequently freeze so as to lose all their sensibility. The only method in my power was to rub them upon my clothes with all the force I had to bring them life, and to prevent losing the use of my hands. As I wanted, if possible, to be in New York on Christmas day, I pushed forward as fast as I could, and rode a good while in the night. As the road was very intricate, and having no guide, I lost my way. After I had travelled some time in uncertainty it was strongly impressed upon my mind to return to the place where the roads divided and take the other road, which I did and pursued it till it brought me to a house, which to my great comfort was an inn. So I took up my abode for the night. After a little refreshment I proposed family prayer, to which they readily consented, and God gave me uncommon freedom to wrestle with him for their salvation."

He passed a memorable night. It was such as those remember who have gone through severe winters in northern New Jersey. "The night," he says, "was bitter cold. I was glad to have a very large fire in my room; took the clothes off another bed and likewise my own wearing apparel and spread them all over me. Yet it was with some difficulty I weathered out the night."

Pilmoor renewed his "difficult and dangerous journey" the next day, which was the Christmas of 1771, and arrived safe in New York about five o'clock. "This," he declares, "has been one of the most distressing journeys of my life on account of the cold."

Indications of trouble now appear. Pilmoor wrote the day after his arrival that "as some disaffected persons had insinuated I should meet with a cold reception in New York, my friends made a point of showing themselves, so that I never met with so kind a reception before." We get a further glimpse of the ruffled waters on the last day of 1771. In the afternoon Pilmoor had Messrs. R. Sause, C. White, and M. Molloy to speak with him about certain letters they had written to London and Dublin concerning Boardman and himself. "They all denied," says Pilmoor, that "they had written the *words* which Mr. Wesley had transmitted to us. So we concluded to drop the matter and bury all past grievances." This episode shows that the American Methodists held intercourse by correspondence with their great founder.

A regular watch-night was observed in New York, at which both Pilmoor and Asbury spoke. The latter had just returned from a preaching tour on Staten Island. The only reference made by him to the watch-meeting is in the following sentence: "We have been favored here with a very solemn watch-night: many felt the power of God." Pilmoor informs us that this watch-meeting began at eight o'clock. "The Lord," he says, "enabled me to speak strong and solemn words on 'Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.' As I exerted myself rather too much I was very unwell while Mr. Asbury was speaking." A little after eleven o'clock Pilmoor again spoke and they continued till midnight, "according to our custom, to conclude the *old* and begin the *new year* in the worship of God."

Asbury and Pilmoor were in the city of New York on the first day of 1772, and they each on that day made a diary record. The records are somewhat dissimilar. Asbury signalized the new year by inscribing this passage in his Journal: "I find that the preachers have their friends in the

cities and care not to leave them. There is a strange party spirit. For my part I desire to be faithful to God and man." Pilmoor on the same day and in the same place wrote in his Journal these reflections and aspirations: "I am now entered upon another year. How swift the seasons roll! My time is short, and yet how much remains to be done! O, may I begin with the year and devote every hour to God! Let all my future life, O Lord, be thine, and all I am be forever given up to thee."

Asbury does not make any allusion to Pilmoor's arrival or work in New York, in this winter time of 1772, except to remark that he was ill. With Mr. Sause, Asbury left the city for West Farms on the third of January, and he preached there that night. Pilmoor recorded in his Journal on the same day this statement: "Mr. Asbury set off for the country and I resolved to lay myself out for the salvation of the citizens." That day "at twelve o'clock," he adds, "we had a blessing from God at the intercession." It thus appears that this meeting was held at noon here as it was in Europe. A cold day was the first Sunday of the year 1772, but there was warmth in John Street. "Notwithstanding the cold we had a fine congregation in the morning," says Pilmoor, "and our labor was not in vain in the Lord. At night we had a very full chapel and God enabled me to speak with power." On Monday he was employed in study in visiting the people at their homes and in writing to his friends in Europe. He "was greatly blest in conversation, and in meditation on the word of God," the following day. He asserts that "as the streets were almost covered with ice, so that no one could venture out without danger, I was surprised to find more than four hundred persons in the chapel in the evening. I preached on that fine description of the Supreme authority of Christ: 'He hath the Key of David; he openeth and no man shutteth; he shutteth and no man openeth.'"

Pilmoor now turned his face to the country, and on January 8th we find him with Henry Newton at one of his former preaching places, namely, Newtown. "In crossing the river," he says, "we were in great danger from the ice, but

we got safely over, and about noon found a fine company waiting for us. I began immediately and preached Christ Jesus the Lord. Afterward turned back and preached in the city at night."

Despite the rigidity of the winter the preacher enjoyed very encouraging tokens in New York. The frost on the second Sunday of January "was so sharp that it was very difficult for the people to venture out; yet," he says, "we had a fine congregation both morning and evening. The New Yorkers are so disposed for hearing the Gospel that they easily break through all difficulties and flock to the churches like doves to their windows." The day afterward he had, he tells us, "a comfortable morning in my studies. The rest of the day I spent in giving advice to those that called on me for direction, and visiting the sick." He was at a sick-bed, perhaps a death-bed, where he witnessed the triumph of a Christian believer. "I was much comforted," he writes, "in being with one of the Methodists who seemed on the borders of the eternal world, but death has lost all his terror and the grave its victory." Pilmoor went "from family to family the ensuing Thursday to spend the day in prayer and praise," and "found it profitable." A day of delightful refreshing in New York was the third Sunday of January, 1772. "My heavenly Master was with us this day," Pilmoor declares. "He greatly comforted my heart in the morning preaching. But in the evening I had indeed the Kingdom of heaven within me. The chapel was crowded with attentive hearers. A solemn awe sat upon every countenance and many besides myself seemed to feel the 'o'erwhelming power of saving grace.' In that blest hour my wondering soul was ready to say with Peter: 'Lord it is good for us to be here.'" The ministry of Pilmoor was attended by very large congregations in New York and Philadelphia, and the people were not only interested, but often deeply moved in hearing him preach.

He gladly embraced an opportunity of preaching in the jail on the first of February. Many of the prisoners, including a young man under sentence of death, attended the service.

“As these,” says Pilmoor, “could have no cloak for their sins, nor anything to plead but guilty, I explained, ‘Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin,’ etc. The word seemed to pierce their souls and the citizens who had been admitted were likewise greatly affected. After preaching I had much conversation with the criminal and God enabled me to plead with him in prayer for the life of his precious soul.”

During the time that Pilmoor was thus toiling in the city, Asbury was continuing his preaching tour in the adjacent regions. He preached at West Chester to “only a few,” and at several other places, including Mamaroneck, East Chester, New City Island, New Rochelle, and Rye. At the latter place he found the people “insensible.” They cry, “The Church! the Church!” he says; “there are a few Presbyterians, but they have suffered their meeting-house to go to ruin and have lost the power of religion if they ever had it.” During the latter part of January he was quite ill in the country, but received kind and thoughtful care, day and night, from the parents and children of the family that entertained him. He returned to New York in a sleigh the eighth of February.

He was yet weak in body on the following Sunday, “but,” he says, “Brother Pilmoor being ill I preached in New York in the morning and found life.” Pilmoor mentions his own illness at this time and says “the severe cold I caught some time ago increased upon me so much that I was not able to preach. However, it happened in a very good time, as Mr. Asbury is just arrived from the country, so that the congregation will not be disappointed.” Asbury caught cold walking in the city and returned to his lodgings chilled and very ill. “The sickness kept me at home,” he says, “above a week.” Pilmoor refers to the recurrence of the illness of Asbury thus: “Mr. Asbury was taken ill and obliged to keep his room. I felt my heart affected with gratitude to God for raising me up in time to attend on my friend.”

Two gentlemen from Philadelphia arrived on February fifteenth, who had come to New York to visit Pilmoor. “They are rightly called Philadelphians,” he exclaims, “for they do truly abound with brotherly love.” At this time that invari-

able accompaniment of a term of cold weather, namely, ice, was in New York, and proved an obstacle to the public meetings. "All the streets were like glass," on the afternoon of February 17, 1772, says Pilmoor, "so that our evening congregation was but small. However, the Lord gave us his blessing."

Asbury left the city on the twentieth of February, 1772, for Staten Island, where he spent a week, preaching at Van Pelt's, Justice Wright's, and elsewhere. "Some," he says, "had not heard a sermon for half a year—such a famine there is of the word in these parts, and a still greater one of the *pure* word." During the week of Asbury's absence Pilmoor completed his term in New York.

He attended the execution on the twenty-first of a prisoner whom he had visited. A large part of the population turned out to witness the tragic spectacle. It afforded an instance of the devotion of the primitive preachers of Methodism to the work of saving the lost. Just before the doomed man suffered, "his answers," says Pilmoor, "afforded me hope that God would yet appear for him and deliver him before he left the body. As we were walking down the stairs together he again repeated his desire to have me with him at the place of execution. As I had given him a kind of conditional promise some time before I dared not draw back, though I would gladly have been excused. When the cart came to the gallows I stepped up to him. I gave out the fifty-first psalm. The sheriff gave me liberty to pray. Above seven thousand persons stood all around me. A great multitude of them were deeply affected while I called upon the Lord, and entreated him to have mercy upon the dying man, and likewise on all poor ruined sinners. I then took leave of him and came down from the cart."

This painful service Pilmoor regarded as affecting favorably through its influence on the public mind the interests of Methodism. "My attendance on the poor man who died this day," he writes, "has been of infinite service to the cause in which I am engaged. Many thousands heard me in the fields who would never have come to the chapel, and were

highly satisfied that I went with him to the tree, when all the ministers in the city had forsaken him." The next Sabbath after this distressing episode in Pilmoor's New York ministry, there was an "excellent congregation in the morning, and all the people seemed serious," he says, "while I exhorted them to 'lay aside every weight,' etc. In the evening the chapel could not contain the congregation. Many were obliged to stand in the yard while I preached free salvation to sinners through the blood of the Lamb." He finished his visitation of the classes on that day and he had "great cause of rejoicing on their account. There are," he declares, "many living witnesses of free salvation in the society and all in general walk worthy of their profession." The work in the city still advanced, and on Monday, February 24, 1772, "I had many to speak with me," says Pilmoor, "about the state of their souls, some of whom I admitted into the society."

The time of his departure to Philadelphia is at hand. His term in New York at this time was scarcely two days over two months. Though reinforced by Asbury and Wright, Boardman and Pilmoor continued to labor in the two cities, but their exchanges became more frequent. Pilmoor states that on the 26th of February he "was busy all day taking leave of my dear friends and preparing for my journey to Philadelphia. The people were very unwilling to part, but we must submit to the government we are under, and do all in our power to promote the work at large."

He began his journey to the Quaker City with Mr. John Dowers, the twenty-seventh of February, 1772. "Many of the dear New Yorkers," he says, "accompanied me to the water-side, where we took the boat for Amboy." Asbury returned to the city the same day and says, "I found brother Pilmoor had set off for Philadelphia in the morning."

As the boat was approaching the Jersey shore at Amboy, and the people were paying their fares, there was one passenger without means to pay. Pilmoor proposed a collection, and says, "We promptly raised him money enough to help him on his journey." The preacher took the stage early next

morning, and after a ride of fifty miles he came, weary, to Burlington on Friday night. There he remained for a short season. He preached in Burlington on the parable of the ten virgins on Saturday evening, and on Sunday morning, March first, in the same town, he expounded the parable of the talents. He dined with Dr. Smith, "where," he says, "I met with several pious and agreeable Quakers who are all partakers of the same spirit, and know that Jesus is to all believers the centre of union and life. Afterward I visited the jail and took some pains to open to the prisoners the plan of salvation. The criminals wept much. At prayer my heart was greatly enlarged. At night the court-house was as full as it could hold. I expounded the latter part of the twenty-fifth of St. Matthew. When I had done a young man came to speak with me, whose heart was deeply affected under the word and he wept. I encouraged him to look unto the Lord and have no doubt his sorrow will soon be turned into joy."

His friend, William White, drove Pilmoor to Cooper's Ferry the next afternoon, and on his arrival at Philadelphia he found that Boardman was still there. Both preachers continued for several days "in Philadelphia and had plenty of work."

Captain Webb was expected at the morning service in St. George's on Sunday, the eighth of March, but as he did not arrive, Pilmoor preached. He also preached at ten o'clock at the Bettering House to a large congregation, "and the word of the Lord was quick and powerful." "In the evening," he says, "our own church was as full as it could hold, and we had a solemn, refreshing season."

He remained only twelve days in Philadelphia, when he returned to New York. Why his stay was so brief does not appear. He and Boardman had decided to make their extended journeys, which were soon to begin; and it may have seemed to them desirable that Pilmoor should spend another season in New York before his departure to the South. Within three weeks after Pilmoor left Philadelphia, Asbury was again in that city, and there, April 2, 1772, he received from Boardman the information that he had planned for

himself to go to Boston, Pilmoor to Virginia, Wright to New York, and for Asbury to stay three months in Philadelphia. "With this," says the latter, "I was well pleased." It thus appears that Mr. Asbury was willing to labor in the city, and also that Mr. Wright should do likewise.

There is a blank in Asbury's Journal for almost a month after Pilmoor's departure from New York, in the latter end of February, 1772. Therefore we do not know what he then did. When Pilmoor returned to New York, on the 17th of March, he found that Asbury had gone from that city. We find Asbury in that month at South Amboy, New Jersey, where he preached, and on the twenty-seventh he "set off on a rough-gaited horse for Burlington." He preached in the court-house in that town two days later to many hearers, and the next day in a Baptist meeting-house at New Mills (Pemberton). He returned to Burlington the following day, and the day next ensuing, April 2, 1772, he reached Philadelphia and was much comforted in finding there Boardman and Captain Webb.

Of the labors of Richard Wright from his arrival until the spring of 1772 we know but little. Robert Williams was in Philadelphia late in the fall of 1771, and Wright left that city with him for Delaware. Pilmoor says that on November 11th "Mr. Williams and Mr. Wright set off for Wilmington, and I was left alone in Philadelphia." It appears from Asbury's reference to Wright that he was "left at his own discretion." Asbury started for Wilmington in the following April, expecting to find Wright there, but they accidentally met about four miles from the town." The allusion by Asbury to Bohemia in the same connection would indicate that Wright had been there also. Bohemia Manor was in the southern part of Cecil County, Maryland, and it is said that Wright "was very popular in the Manor and did good work for Methodism. That marvellous evangelist, George Whitefield, had preceded him there some thirty years, and the fruits of his eloquent and unctuous ministrations were seen in the hearty welcome extended to our pioneer preachers." *

* Peninsula Methodist (Wilmington, Del.), November 15, 1890.

Pilmoor "set off on horseback in company with Mr. Dove," from Philadelphia to New York, on Saturday, March 14, 1772. It seems there had just been a snow-storm, and "as many people had been out in sleighs they had beaten down the road," so about five o'clock Pilmoor reached Burlington, New Jersey, and at seven he preached from the text "And I of Christ." He preached again at Burlington the following morning (Sunday) from the parable of the ten pieces of silver. Judging it to be more blessed to give than to receive, he, instead of going to church, preached in the jail "to the poor, neglected prisoners, who," he says, "were greatly affected under the word, and their flowing tears encouraged me to hope that some of them may enter into the kingdom of God. About noon I went down with several of the friends to the water's side, hoping to find the boat for Bristol, but it was not there. However, we prevailed upon two young men to put us over upon a shallop. It was very dangerous crossing on account of the vast quantities of ice in the river, but Israel's Shepherd was with us and brought us safe to shore." Thence he proceeded to Trenton, New Jersey, where he arrived about five o'clock. "As they did not expect me," he says, "we were obliged to send a person round the town to give notice, and at seven we had a very large congregation in the court-house, and many were cut to the heart." Thus he passed the Sunday.

He "set off" for New Brunswick the next day, reached Woodbridge, and got safely to New York the day after, namely, March 17, 1772. "I expected," he says, "to find Mr. Asbury in the city, but he had gone and had given out that there would be no preaching before Thursday, but the people soon heard of my arrival and we had a lovely company in the evening." Within a week thereafter he had a conciliatory meeting with Richard Sause. "Former animosities are fled away and pure friendship reigns," wrote Pilmoor.

He now met in New York two men from the borders of New England, "who," he says, "entreated me to go to that country to preach the Gospel and think it would be gladly received." Thus was the way for Methodism opening in the country.

We have recently seen evidence of extreme cold in New York in the winter of 1772, and now Pilmoor remarks an extraordinary instance of low temperature there in the spring of that year. He asserts that on April second and third "it was as cold as if it had been January. The snow came down in such abundance that it was with difficulty the people could get out of their houses, yet we had a few at the chapel who are determined to stop at nothing, but always attend whenever the doors are open." He soon witnessed much interest among the people. As the spring weather was pleasant, he, on the eighth of April, began preaching at five in the morning and found that many were willing to leave their beds for the sake of hearing the word. Indeed, he declares that the "citizens of New York are never weary of hearing the Gospel, and I believe that there are no people under the heaven that understand what they hear better than they." He had service in the morning and a meeting of the young people at night on Saturday, April eleventh. "The young people's meeting," he says, "was very refreshing." Pilmoor wrote a letter, the original draft of which is still in existence, on Thursday of this week, to Mary Thorn, of Philadelphia. It is full of devout sentiment. The indefatigable preacher says that the hearers "flocked to their chapel like doves to their windows on the Sunday following. Monday we had about three hundred hearers at five o'clock, most of whom seemed to worship God in spirit and in truth. Tuesday, after preaching in the morning, I had two women to tell me that God has lately spoken peace to their souls—one of them this morning and the other a few days ago."

Williams, who went from Philadelphia southward in November, 1771, and who seems to have labored during the winter in the South, now appears again in the North. He reached Philadelphia April 21, 1772, and two days later left that city for New York. He brought "a flaming account of the work" in Virginia.* He and Pilmoor are now together in New York again, and no doubt his representations of the

* Asbury's Journal, Vol. I., p. 28. Wakeley erroneously says, in *Lost Chapters*, that it was Wright who came from Virginia.

southern field had emboldened Pilmoor to travel thither. It is not improbable by the facts he brought to Pilmoor's view, and the arguments and persuasions he may from time to time have employed, that Robert Williams was instrumental in securing for the South a year of the ministry of Joseph Pilmoor. The plan for Pilmoor to go thither had been formed, however, prior to Williams's present visit to New York. Pilmoor, on the thirtieth of April, said: "Mr. Williams met the people in the morning and I began to prepare for my journey southward." Boardman arrived in New York from Philadelphia on his journey to New England on the first day of May, "and we were much comforted together," says Pilmoor.

In the meantime Asbury had travelled from Philadelphia to Bohemia Manor, in Maryland. He even turned his eye toward Baltimore, but the distance of ninety miles deterred him from going there, courageous itinerant as he was. He met Richard Wright on April 8, 1772, about four miles from Wilmington. "He seemed glad to see me," says Asbury, "and willing to be subject to order." The next morning Wright proceeded to Philadelphia. It was arranged that he should now spend five months in New York.

Pilmoor's eye was toward the South. The distance of ninety, nay a thousand, miles in a strange country did not deter him from entering upon his laborious journey toward the Southern provinces. He tells us that he "was totally unacquainted with the people, the road, and everything else. He only knew," he says, "that there were multitudes of souls scattered through a vast extent of country, and was willing to encounter any difficulty and undergo the greatest hardships, so I might win them to Christ." The rising Wesleyan movement in America is about to enter upon another and a wider stage of its development.

Asbury is now in Philadelphia insisting upon discipline. He asserts, on April 25th, that he "preached to the people with some sharpness. In the evening I kept the door," he adds, "met the society and read Mr. Wesley's epistle to them." He intended to go from the city three days later, but was unable

to procure a horse ; “ so,” he says, “ I stayed and heard that many were offended at my shutting them out of society meeting, as they had been greatly indulged before. But this does not trouble me. While I stay the rules must be attended to ; and I cannot suffer myself to be guided by half-hearted Methodists.”

Four of the American Methodist preachers are now in New York, and on Sunday, the third of May, 1772, Pilmoor and Boardman, Webb and Williams were together at the communion at St. Paul's. By this interesting incident we are reminded that the Methodists of America at that time had neither ordination nor the sacraments. They were chiefly communicants in the Church of England. The four Wesleyan preachers had good-fellowship in New York on the above Sunday, of which Pilmoor says : “ This day all our meetings, both public and private, were attended with the presence and blessing of God and were very refreshing to our souls.”

The preservation until now of the historic church where Boardman, Pilmoor, Webb, and Williams in company received the Holy Communion on May 3, 1771, and in which President Washington attended worship on the day of his first inauguration in 1789, is one of the remarkable facts in the history of the American metropolis. The square of ground on which it stands, bounded by Broadway, Vesey, Fulton, and Church Streets, is immensely valuable. Yet neither the pressure of commerce nor the exactions of avarice have been able to efface the sacred structure. It was begun in 1763 and dedicated in October, 1766. Therefore it has stood throughout the whole period of the existence of Methodism in America, and it gives promise of standing for many decades, not to say centuries, if the conservatism which has so long preserved it shall continue to bear sway.

In a few days Pilmoor is to turn his face toward the South and Williams is to move in the same direction. Boardman is to begin his journey to New England and Captain Webb is to go to old England and there obtain more laborers for the American field. Dr. Stevens attributes this wider itinerancy of the preachers to the influence of Asbury,

and says: "It was under the impulse of Asbury's example that Robert Williams now went to Virginia and that Pilmoor went preaching southward as far as Savannah." And before Stevens, Dr. Bangs asserted that "in the month of April of this year [1772] Mr. Pilmoor, following the example of Mr. Asbury, travelled South through Maryland and Virginia as far as Norfolk." *

Asbury at this time had not given the preachers any example of very extensive itinerating; nor had he gone to Virginia, or even far into Maryland. He had once reached Bohemia Manor, in the northern part of that province, but he informs us that he did not go to Baltimore, ninety miles further, on account of the distance. Williams was quite as adventurous and active an itinerant as Asbury, and he was in Virginia before any deputation of Wesleyan preachers appeared in the country, he having landed from Europe at Norfolk and immediately opened his mission there from the steps of a house, and that very night led the wife of a sea-captain into the kingdom. He afterward went back and forth between New York and Maryland before Asbury touched the American shore. He started with Wright southward from Philadelphia fifteen days after Asbury and Wright landed there, and the following April he was back in that city, the bearer of a "flaming account of the work" in Virginia. The extended travels of Pilmoor and Boardman in 1772 do not seem to have been undertaken at Asbury's suggestion or from the "impulse" of his "example," but rather, as Pilmoor says, because as there were preachers to care for the cities now, he and Boardman decided to travel abroad that they might "seek the lost sheep in the wilderness." Captain Webb sailed for England about the time that Pilmoor began his Southern journey. He appeared at the British Conference which sat at Leeds the first of August, 1772, and pleaded earnestly and successfully before that body for more preachers for America.

* See Dr. Stevens's *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Vol. I., p. 131, and Dr. Bangs's do., Vol. I., p. 73.

CHAPTER XV.

PILMOOR'S JOURNEY TO MARYLAND.

WHEN Jesus sent forth his twelve apostles he said unto them, "As ye go preach." Thus also did the primitive Methodist preachers. Beginning his journey to the South, Pilmoor rode forward, preaching as he went.

He left New York on Friday, May 8, 1772. "Many of the dear people accompanied me to the water's side," he says, "where we found a boat ready to sail for Staten Island. Mr. Henry Newton and I went on board, and in less than two hours landed safe." Pilmoor preached the same day on the Island at Captain Wright's. He remarks that "in the evening I walked with my companion to view the beauties of nature." He thus depicts what he saw: "The orchards are in full bloom and the trees in the wood look as white as virgin snow. The gentle breezes were laden with fragrance, the turtle-doves were cooing in the groves, and everything conspired to inspire us with gratitude and fill us with praise to the God who made all things by his power and constantly upholds all this beauteous frame."

He preached at the house of "a poor widow," and again at Captain Wright's, and on Sunday, the tenth of May, took a vessel and went with "many friends" to Elizabethtown Point, where they arrived just in time for church. He intended to preach in the court-house after the church service, but the Rev. Mr. Caldwell sent some of his elders to offer his church, which Pilmoor gladly accepted, and in it met a fine congregation, to whom he preached on "Them that honor me I will honor." The minister was one of his auditors, and says Pilmoor: "He treated me with the utmost civility, and in everything he behaved like a disciple of Christ."

The Rev. James Caldwell, to whom Pilmoor here refers, was then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabethtown, now the city of Elizabeth, and it is still one of the foremost churches of that denomination in New Jersey. He was an eloquent preacher, a conspicuous citizen, and an ardent patriot. "He was one of the first who embarked in the cause of his country. His zeal, activity, and unshaken integrity under every circumstance of the Revolution are deeply imprinted on the minds of his countrymen. As a preacher of the Gospel he was excelled by very few of the present age."* Of him it is said that he rarely preached "without weeping, and at times would melt his whole audience to tears. He was one day preaching to the Battalion, the next marching with them to battle, and the next administering the consolations of the Gospel to some dying parishioner. His people were most devotedly attached to him and the army adored him."† Mr. Caldwell's Church was fired by a Refugee in 1780. A few months later his wife was shot by a Refugee through a "window of a room to which she had retired with her children for safety and prayer," and on the 24th of November, 1781, Mr. Caldwell was shot dead at Elizabethtown Point by a soldier who it was believed was bribed to assassinate the devoted pastor and patriot. His name was given to, and is still perpetuated by, Caldwell Township in the county of Essex, in the State in which he labored, suffered, and died.

On leaving Elizabeth, Pilmoor proceeded, by way of Woodbridge and Princeton, to Trenton. At Trenton he preached on May 12, 1772, and says "truly the Lord of the harvest was present with us."

The next day he went "with many friends to Pennytown [Pennington?], about eight miles off [from Trenton], where," he says, "I preached in the Presbyterian Church with very much freedom." At three o'clock the same day he met "a fine company of people in the school-house at Somerset," and in the evening he preached at Trenton in the court-

* The New Jersey Journal, November 28, 1781.

† Notes, Historical and Biographical, concerning Elizabeth-Town, pp. 77-8. By Nicholas Murray.

house, "which was as full as it could hold." This day he had travelled much, besides preaching three times, and was greatly fatigued; yet after publicly preaching he met the Trenton Society at night, "and the Lord was so eminently present," he says, "that we concluded he had kept the best wine until now. When we rose up from prayer a poor negro woman came to me in great distress of soul and cast herself down at my feet. I raised her up and encouraged her to trust in the Lord, who would soon have mercy upon her and pardon all her offenses."

Pilmoor was still in Trenton on the fourteenth of May, when at the early hour of five he preached to a great number of people. "About nine o'clock," he says, "the stage came and I went forward to Philadelphia." Finding the people expected preaching, and no Methodist preacher being in town, he "went immediately to St. George's, and was well rewarded by a blessing from God."

Asbury arrived in Philadelphia the next day. In the evening Pilmoor preached, and the following day he "had the happiness of visiting several of the people." Asbury had been a couple of days in New Jersey, and among other places preached at what he calls the "New Church," which, no doubt, was Greenwich, and of which he says "surely the power of God is among this people." Returning, he speaks of Pilmoor being in the city, and says "the house was given up." "Thus ended," says Lednum, "the first parsonage in Philadelphia."

Asbury preached in St. George's on the Sunday morning of May seventh. Pilmoor preached in the afternoon in a grove at Chestnut Hill, and in the evening in the city.

The effect of Asbury's ideas of government, which he still urged, are now apparent. He seems to have scattered the people considerably. Of the state of matters in St. George's, Pilmoor speaks thus: "O, what a change! When I was here before the great church would hardly hold the congregation; now it is not near full. Such is the fatal consequence of contending about *opinions*, and the administration of *discipline*. It grieves me to the heart to see the people scat-

tered that we have taken such pains to gather, but I cannot help it without opposing the measures of Mr. Wesley's delegate, and that would breed much confusion, so I am obliged to go weeping away. The following days I took what pains I could to collect the people together. We had many good opportunities, both in public and private, and our hopes began to revive. Nothing could hinder our usefulness here if we did but keep to our point and steadily insist upon the pure doctrines of the Gospel, without meddling with politics and opinions."

Concerning this disturbed and depressed state of the society in Philadelphia, it is noticed that the same day that Pilmoor wrote the above description thereof Asbury said in his Journal: "Some slight me in this place on account of my attention to discipline, and some drop off."

On Monday, May 25th, Pilmoor spent the most of the day in visiting the people and preached his farewell sermon. The church was crowded, and he preached with great freedom and power. He felt closely joined with the people, and found it hard to part with them, especially with those whom, he declares, "God has given to me as seals to my ministry."

The Philadelphia and New York Methodists had mostly been brought into the Wesleyan fellowship by the ministry of Pilmoor and Boardman. Even Rankin, who was famous for disciplinary rigidity, and who did not come hither till nearly four years after their arrival, bore testimony to the usefulness of Pilmoor here. When Asbury, who was younger and less experienced in ecclesiastical government than his predecessors, proposed to put an end to partiality for preachers by getting them out of the cities, and to enforce his views of discipline irrespective of consequences, it is not strange that opposition was aroused. Criticism and irritation followed, and the effects became apparent in disaffected feeling and diminished congregations. These consequences Pilmoor saw, and they were also visible to Asbury. On the last Sunday of May, 1772, Asbury preached in St. George's, and "found that offenses increased. However," he declares, "I cannot help it. My way is to go straight forward and

aim at what is right." Less than a month afterward he, in Philadelphia, notes that "Satan strives to sow discord among us, and that makes me desirous to leave the city." About a fortnight after this he remarked the absence of the multitude from the preaching in St. George's thus: "Our congregations here are small." The cause of the diminished numbers he seems to have well understood, for he adds: "They cannot bear the discipline and doctrine, but this does not move me."

While the immediate effect of his rigidity respecting discipline apparently was not good, it may have proved beneficial in the end. By discipline the Methodists in this country were welded into an invincible phalanx which, led by the indomitable captain who so soon caused his hand to be felt, moved with amazing energy, celerity, and success over the land. The power of an army chiefly lies in its discipline; and in proportion as a Church is firmly held in disciplinary bonds will it achieve results; but sternness and the rod of authority need not and should not be exhibited in a way to detract from the good which the exercise of Christian discipline contemplates. Asbury's design was right, but his method, no doubt, was somewhat marred by youthful indiscretion at the beginning.

What the precise points of discipline were as to the application of which Asbury was so urgent is not very clear, except that he seems to have maintained that the society meetings proper should be kept free from the intrusion of persons who were not members; and possibly also that members should be excluded who, in his judgment, were guilty of too much worldliness. For example, in Philadelphia, June 14, 1772, he wrote that he "was grieved to see so much conformity to the world in the article of dress among our people."

Joseph Pilmoor left Philadelphia for the South on the 27th of May, 1772. He had, he says, "many of my dear Philadelphians to take leave of me, who were greatly affected at the thought of parting. About nine o'clock I set off, determined to follow my Lord wherever he should be pleased

to lead me. At 12 o'clock I reached Upper Dublin, where I had appointed to preach. The people had prepared a kind of scaffold for me to stand on and I found great liberty while I preached the everlasting Gospel and invited a listening multitude to the Lamb of God. After a little refreshment I hastened to Matching [Methacton], where I preached at six o'clock. Spent the evening with Mr. Supplee's family, and went to rest under the watchful care of Israel's Shepherd."

This first day's journey with the preaching of two sermons was a suitable preface to the chapters of Southern Methodist history which Pilmoor was about to make. The second day's journey was over ground partially if not entirely new to him. "We set forward early," he writes, "and travelling steadily all the day we got safe into Reading. I was greatly surprised to find such a town above sixty miles from Philadelphia. It contains about 400 families, who live in the greatest plenty, and what is still better, they are at unity with themselves. In the evening we had most of the genteel people of the town at the court-house, and God enabled me to preach the Gospel, not in word only, but also in power. After preaching I went to supper with James Read, Esq., who entertained me and my friends with the greatest hospitality, and we were abundantly blessed while we concluded the day in praise and prayer."

He pursued his journey in company with some persons from Philadelphia on the twenty-eighth of May. About three o'clock on that day they reached Lebanon, Pennsylvania; which, says Pilmoor, "is situated about 80 miles from the city and contains 250 inhabitants, chiefly Germans. There are two churches in it, one Lutheran and one Reformed or Presbyterian." The Presbyterian Church was opened for him, and by the ringing of the bell a fine congregation was brought out, to whom he preached that "men should repent." He then spent the evening with a "Mr. De Haas and his family in religious conversation, singing, and prayer." He appears to have tarried three or four days at Lebanon. While there he prayed for rain and an abundant shower followed, which he accepted as God's answer to his prayer. He

“preached on Sunday twice with considerable freedom of mind, and on Monday night he had a good congregation.” Calvinists and Lutherans attended, “and were comforted together in Him who is the only Saviour of all that believe.”

He went through heat to Lancaster on the second of June over roads that were made temporarily worse by the rain. “On our way,” he says, “we dined at a little town called Mannam [probably Manheim], where a gentleman has built a very large glasshouse, and they have brought their manufactory to great perfection. The proprietor lives in a fine large house, has a large chapel upstairs with pews, pulpit, and an organ in it. We joined in singing a hymn and prayer, and our heavenly Father gave us his blessing. In the afternoon we rode on through a fine, pleasant country to Lancaster.” In the court-house he preached the word with boldness. He feared Court would prevent preaching the next day, but the Court did not sit in the afternoon, and at six o’clock he again preached in the court-house at Lancaster to a small congregation, but saw “no prospect of much good.”

He completed his tour in Pennsylvania June 4, 1772. The man he expected to guide him to Maryland did not appear and he resolved “to set out alone. On the way I called at a little tavern for refreshment,” he says, “and was told the landlord lay at the point of death. They begged I would visit him, which I readily complied with, but found him speechless. However, he seemed to understand what I said, and was affected when I commended him to God in prayer.” Pilmoor then proceeded to a ferry where the river was “about a mile and a quarter broad.” There he crossed the Susquehanna, which afterward his countryman, Campbell, celebrated in mellifluous verse.

CHAPTER XVI.

BOARDMAN IN BOSTON AND WRIGHT IN NEW YORK.

RICHARD BOARDMAN left Philadelphia in April, 1772, for New England. On the evening of the 28th of April he preached at Burlington, New Jersey, and a certain doctor, a man of dissipation, was touched under the sermon.* He arrived in New York City on the first day of May, 1772. Pilmoor noted his arrival and said that Boardman was on "his journey towards the North." It is probable that he went by the way of Newport or Providence by vessel. We have seen that on May 8, 1772, Pilmoor left New York for the South. Six days later the following entry appears in the treasurer's book of the John Street Society: "1772 May 14, To cash paid [for] Mr. Richard Boardman's passage to Rhode Island, 1£ 9s."

There is no extant record of Boardman's travels in New England. Lee, in his "History of the Methodists" (page 14), asserts that Boardman "went as far to the North as Boston," but does not speak of anything he did there. Freeborn Garrettson, on his return from his mission in Nova Scotia, in the spring of 1787, stopped a short time in Boston, which was two years before Lee entered it. Dr. Bangs, who had access to Garrettson's papers and Journal, in his "Life of Garrettson" says: "About seventeen [fifteen] years before the visit of Mr. Garrettson, Mr. Boardman, one of the European Methodist preachers, had preached in Boston and formed a small society. Not being succeeded by any minister of the same order, the society gradually diminished so that there were only three members left. Not being admitted to any of the pulpits of the city, Mr. Garrettson preached a few sermons in

* Asbury's Journal, Vol. I., p. 29.

private houses and passed on to Providence, Rhode Island, where he says he found several persons who loved the Lord Jesus."

Thus the Gospel according to Methodism was preached in the metropolis of New England, and no doubt elsewhere in that region, by Richard Boardman in 1772. As he appears to have gone to Boston by the way of Rhode Island, he doubtless preached also in that province. In an account of Whitefield's preaching in New England, in 1754, Boston and Rhode Island are named together. It is said that on November 7, 1754, Whitefield "took leave of the Boston people at four in the morning and went to Rhode Island." We can hence understand why Boardman's passage was paid to Rhode Island. It no doubt was the more convenient route from New York to Boston.

Boardman's ministry in New England was brief. Asbury met him in the region of Philadelphia in the closing days of July, 1772. While Boardman was in New England, Wright was in charge in New York. An item of "Cash paid for Mr. Wright's trunk" appears in the John Street treasurer's book, May 14, 1772, and on July 16th of the same year there is an entry of "Cash paid Mr. Wright, part of his quarterage, £1. 14, 8;" also September 10, "To cash paid Mr. Wright, the remainder of his quarterage, £5. 14, 0."

At or near Trenton, New Jersey, July 20, 1772, Asbury met a gentleman from New York, who informed him that he was to go to that city, "which," he says, "was what I did not expect." This indicates that Boardman had returned from Boston and changed one or more of the preachers.

Asbury asserts that the gentleman who brought him word that he was to go to New York gave him "an account of Mr. Wright's good behavior," which implies that he was acceptable in that metropolis.

Asbury's journalistic writings are occasionally marred by apparently unnecessary and unfavorable remarks about his associates in the ministry. That Richard Wright had weaknesses is probable; but so perhaps had most of his Wesleyan fellow laborers, who, nevertheless, were on the whole excellent

men and Gospel heroes. Why, without showing that there was any reason requiring it, should Asbury have given utterance to such strictures upon his brother? He says of Wright, in July, 1772: "I fear after all he will settle in Bohemia." Then he must have been acceptable to the Bohemians. Soon after this Asbury, in New York, wrote: "Arriving about five o'clock, found Mr. Wright, who that night had preached his farewell sermon, and told the people that he did not expect to see them any more. I have always dealt honestly with him, but he has been spoiled by gifts. He has been pretty strict in the Society, but ended all with a general love feast; which I think is undoing all that he has done." Then shortly after this Asbury cites in his Journal an incident which suggests that Wright was not pleased with Asbury's animadversions, and also that Asbury was not cured of his disposition to censure him. Under the date of August 4, 1772, in New York, Asbury says: "In the love feast this evening Mr. Wright rose up and spake as well as he could against speaking with severe reflections upon his brother. But all this was mere talk. I know the man and his conversation." This is scarcely what we should anticipate from a man of the great excellencies of Francis Asbury. He seems to have been at this early time rather intolerant respecting men and methods that were not in harmony with his views. But to err is human. The errors of Asbury were specks upon a majestic character which otherwise apparently was of alabaster whiteness. It is fortunate for the memory of Richard Wright that his vindication, by the testimony of a New Yorker to his good deportment in that city, appears in the Journal of Asbury on the page preceding the page on which the latter's accusatory references stand. It should be remembered that at this period Asbury was not twenty-seven years old and that as he advanced in years he grew in wisdom and in knowledge of life and of men. His temperament, however, ever inclined him to be critical with respect to men and methods that did not accord with his predilections.

CHAPTER XVII.

PILMOOR'S WORK IN MARYLAND IN 1772.

MOST of the time that Pilmoor tarried in Philadelphia before going South, and during much of his progress to Maryland, Asbury was preaching at different places in New Jersey. Of these he mentions Trenton, Burlington, Greenwich, Gloucester, New Mills, Haddonfield, and Mantua Creek. He was at Evans's Chapel at Greenwich on Sunday morning, May 24, 1772, and "preached at ten o'clock to near three hundred people, collected from different parts," and also on Thursday, June 5, when "about two hundred willing people" heard him. It is singular that in his Journal he never mentioned Edward Evans, who labored at Greenwich, and there died in the month of Asbury's arrival. Hence, until Pilmoor's manuscripts came to light the name and work of the first Wesleyan preacher that came forth in America had almost ceased to be remembered in Methodism. The church, of which Mr. Evans was the first pastor, was built one hundred and twenty-five years ago, which was long before the Methodists thought of severing their relation with the Church of England. The Greenwich "Church was founded at a meeting of the country-folk in Berkley on November 29, 1770. They first assembled at the houses of the several members, and worshipped without any fixed denominational ideas, securing preachers as best they could. The confusion and dissatisfaction which resulted from such an arrangement led to a meeting at which the congregation decided to build a church and have worship according to the tenets of the Church of England, and so it has continued ever since." *

* Account of the 125th anniversary of St. Peter's Church, Clarksboro, N. J., which is the successor of the church near Berkley in Greenwich Township, of which Edward Evans was the first minister, in the New York Tribune, November 30, 1895. Compare with pages 277-278.

Having crossed the river, Pilmoor stood for the first time, June 4, 1772, on the south shore of the Susquehanna. He proceeded into Maryland about five miles to Mr. Dallam's, "where," he says, "I found honest Robert Williams preaching. We spent the evening together with the family in great comfort and rested in peace. The next day, as it had been published, we had a fine congregation, and the Lord enabled me to preach glad tidings to the poor and meek. After preaching we spent the evening with William Husband, a man of pretty extensive reading and tolerably good understanding. If he had but a sense of the favor of God, he would be happy. After supper many poor negroes came in. We joined in an hymn of praise, I gave them an exhortation and concluded the day with prayer. While we were on our knees wrestling with God I observed one of the negroes go out and thought he was affected in his mind. And so it happened, for we heard him calling loudly upon God to bless him and save his soul from sin."

On Saturday, June 6, Pilmoor and Williams started with a guide, and going the nearest way through the woods, soon came to Richard Dallam's, "a gentleman of considerable fortune and truly desirous of serving the Lord." Pilmoor describes Dallam's home as beautiful for situation, "on a branch of the Chesapeake; the land exceedingly rich and fertile, and everything conducive to the happiness of rural life." Here at four in the afternoon "a fine company assembled, many of them of the genteeler sort," and were serious and reverent in their behavior. His conversation with the family in the evening was profitable and the day was concluded with prayer.

Robert Williams, who but a month before was in New York City, reached Maryland in advance of Pilmoor. Williams was the first Methodist who preached in Maryland after Strawbridge, and he was at this time quite familiar with its localities. It is probable, therefore, that he had published Pilmoor's coming, and made appointments for him, so that without needless inconvenience or loss of time he was able to enter upon his labors in the region of the Chesapeake.

The day succeeding that of his arrival at Richard Dallam's (a man who became endeared to the early Methodist preachers) was the Sabbath, and Pilmoor went to the "new chapel," which we have already contemplated;* a chapel, he says, "which a number of planters have lately built for the Methodists." There is foundation for the belief that this "chapel" was the "log meeting house" of Strawbridge. That "log meeting house," it seems, never was deeded to the Methodists.

On the Lord's day, June 7, 1772, after rising early and partaking of a breakfast, Pilmoor started from Richard Dallam's abode for the "new chapel," presumably with Robert Williams, where he "found a large congregation waiting. I retired into the woods," says Pilmoor, "a few moments for secret prayer, and then our worship began. As it was the feast of Pentecost I preached on the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and He was present to make the word of God effectual upon the hearts of the people. After the first service was over we waited about an hour and then began again. Mr. Williams preached with a good deal of freedom and the people were deeply affected." Thus we get a glimpse of Williams at, as we suppose, the earliest sanctuary of Methodism in Maryland. We see him preaching there on the first Sabbath of June, 1772, after a discourse by Pilmoor, and preaching, too, with a free utterance to a congregation who were markedly moved by his sermon.

Robert Williams was a searching, an edifying, and an awakening preacher. If not brilliant, certainly he was very successful. He was at home among the rural assemblies of the South, and moved as "a burning and a shining light" through Maryland and Virginia. In the latter province he was the Baptist of the Wesleyan movement; his name is associated with its origin there. He was tireless in his movements. His zeal was displayed in fervid and laborious preaching in the North and in the South. The passing views we get of him indicate that he had reached and perhaps passed middle life when he came to this country. Jesse Lee

* See pages 90-96, inclusive.

indeed speaks of him as "old Robert Williams." But his ardent soul was young in vigor, enthusiasm, and courage.

His sermons sometimes aroused antipathy as well as better emotions. Pilmoor gives an instance of this at Norfolk, where, on the twentieth of November, 1772, a congregation loudly signified their dislike of the faithful evangelist. Williams preached, and the people, because of their unfriendly feelings toward him, made a disturbance, so that Pilmoor found it necessary "to go and sit among them to keep them in order." They then behaved with pretty good decorum until the preacher ceased. Of Williams's preaching power Pilmoor has borne good witness. When Williams preached in New York, in the summer of 1771, Pilmoor declared that "he gave us a very good sermon on the Love of God, and it proved a blessing to the people." Williams was in the home of the Rev. Devereux Jarratt, rector of Bath Episcopal parish, Dinwiddie County, Virginia, in March, 1773. He was the first Methodist preacher, Jarratt informs us, who appeared in that part of the province, and he describes Williams as "a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher," who "was greatly blest in detecting the hypocrite, razing false foundations and stirring up believers to press after a present salvation from the remains of sin." * Furthermore Jarratt said, "I liked his preaching very well, especially the animated manner in which his discourses were delivered."

He shrewdly sought opportunities to address the people. Jesse Lee says that Williams "spared no pains in order to do good. He frequently went to church to hear the established clergy, and as soon as divine service ended he has gone out of the church and standing on a stump, block, or log has begun to sing, pray or preach to hundreds of people." He would often follow his public appeals with personal advice. "It was common with him," says Lee, "after preaching to ask most of the people that he spoke with some question about the welfare of their souls and to encourage them to serve God." His success was visible. Lee states that "soon

* A Brief Narrative of the Revival in Virginia. In a letter to a friend. P. 6. London, 1778.

after he began to preach through the country from Petersburg into the north part of North Carolina the fruit of his labors began to appear and souls were awakened and brought to the knowledge of God." His memory was vivid and fragrant after his work was done. "Although he is dead," says Lee, "he yet speaketh to many of his spiritual children, while they remember his faithful preaching and his holy walk."* Williams died September 26, 1775. Two days after Asbury wrote: "I ventured to preach a funeral sermon at the burial of brother W. He has been a very useful, laborious man and the Lord gave him many seals to his ministry. Perhaps no one in America has been an instrument of awakening so many souls as God has awakened by him." We shall overtake this primitive travelling preacher again and again as we pursue him in his fruitful itinerancy in the South.

After both Pilmoor and Williams had preached at the "new chapel" on the Sunday of June 7, 1772, they had an evening service at Josias Dallam's, "and it was a time of refreshing." The next morning they "set out pretty early for Bushtown, where," says Pilmoor, "I preached to a very serious congregation under a fine shady tree. We then went on to a place called Gunpowder Neck, where I preached to a lively, serious congregation with enlargedness of heart, and afterwards met a few of them in private as a society. Our hearts were much knit together in the love of the gospel."

It is apparent from this that at this time, June 8, 1772, there was a society in Gunpowder Neck. There was one also at the place, which, no doubt, was Pipe or Sam's Creek, where a chapel had been "lately built for the Methodists." There was a society also at Deer Creek, where Pilmoor preached his first sermon in Maryland. It is almost certain that there was a society at Bushtown; one at the Forks of Gunpowder; another in the neighborhood of Mr. Bond's; another at Evans's, and another one or two possibly elsewhere. There was not at this time, however, any society in Baltimore. It is therefore evident that the Methodist evangelists had not hugged the cities in the South. They were country itiner-

* See Lee's History of the Methodists, pp. 43-53.

ants, and the founding and shaping of the cause in the cities was mostly done by Boardman and Pilmoor until they returned to England.

The Methodists in Maryland were demonstrative in their meetings, which fact gave Pilmoor some concern. He feared that evil would result from what to him seemed wild-fire. He deemed it his duty to check the exhibitions of unrestrained fervor he witnessed in those rural societies. After his labors at Bushtown, June 8, 1772, he had "much conversation" in the evening "with some who," he says, "think they are called to preach and are as hot as fire, but it is dreadfully *wild* and *enthusiastic*. God has undoubtedly begun a good work in these parts by the ministry of Messrs. John King, Robert Williams, and Robert Strawbridge, but there is much danger from those who follow a heated imagination rather than the pure illumination of the Spirit and the directions of the word of God. Wherever I go I find it necessary to bear my testimony against all wildness, shouting, and confusion in the worship of God, and at the same time to feed and preserve the sacred fire which is certainly kindled in many parts of this country. If this can be done the work will spread on every side and multitudes be gathered to Christ. But it is hard to stem the torrent and convince ignorant and fiery men that the infinite Jehovah is much more pleased with the gentle meltings of a broken heart and the pious breathings of humble love than with all the noise and clamor in the world. Yet I hope God will succeed my endeavors and preserve this noble vine which his own right hand has planted."

Nathan Perigo had begun to preach in that region as early as the winter preceding Pilmoor's visit. Probably he was one of those whom the latter describes as being "hot" and "enthusiastic." Pilmoor was at Perigo's house during this visit to Maryland. Philip Gatch says of Perigo, in January, 1772: "I was near him when he opened the exercises of the first meeting I attended. His prayer alarmed me much. I never had witnessed such energy, nor heard such expressions in prayer before. I was afraid that God would send some judg-

ment upon the congregation for my being in such a place. I attempted to make my escape. I returned." Gatch was not then a Christian, but under the sermon that Perigo then preached, he saw himself "altogether sinful and helpless, while the dread of hell seized my guilty conscience." He says he "had heard of the Methodists driving some persons mad, and began to fear it might be the case with me."

Gatch declares that at his conversion, which occurred in Baltimore County, the twenty-sixth of April, 1772, "ere I was aware I was shouting aloud and should have shouted louder if I had had more strength. I was the first person known to shout in that part of the country. The order of God differs from the order of man. He knows how to do his own work and will do it in his own way, though it often appears strange to us. Indeed, it is a strange work to convert a precious soul. I had no idea of the greatness of the change till the Lord gave me to experience it. A grateful sense of the mercy and goodness of God to my poor soul overwhelmed me." *

Freeborn Garrettson grew to manhood in Baltimore County, where he heard the Methodists before Pilmoor went there. In 1827 Garrettson preached a Semi-Centennial sermon, in which he related some of his reminiscences of the early Methodists of Maryland. He describes them as Pilmoor says he found them. Garrettson in that sermon says: "The work of the Lord went on in a powerful manner. Sinners fell under the word and cried for mercy, while others shouted the praises of God. I began to think that this was carrying matters too far. Societies, however, were formed, souls were converted and some of the young converts began to speak in public. Satan was enraged and persecution commenced. Mr. Pilmoor came to Maryland. I heard him and was pleased, for I thought he was checking what I called enthusiasm." Garrettson dated his conversion three years subsequent to this visit of Pilmoor.

Pilmoor continued his labors in Maryland for a season, and found the people hungering for the living word. On the

*Sketch of Philip Gatch, by John McLean, LL.D., Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, p. 13.

ninth of June, 1772, he went with some friends to the Forks of Gunpowder, where he met "a fine congregation, and the gospel was attended with success. When I had done the people were so affected that they would not go away, but wanted me to tell them more about that excellent way of salvation by Christ. After speaking with them for some time I prayed to God for them and we parted in peace. I then went home with a gentleman who had been to hear me, and was in hopes of a little retirement, but the house was soon almost filled with people ; so I spent the evening in trying to help them forward in the way of salvation."

Pilmoor went to Mr. Bond's the ensuing day, accompanied by Mr. Baker. He preached "to a little company, who received the word with gladness. As some of them came a little too late," he says, "and were unwilling to go away, and I not having it in my power to stay any longer, I desired Mr. King to stay behind and preach to them. Mr. Williams, who met me here, went forward with me towards Baltimore. But hearing on the road that preaching was not published, we turned aside to a friend's house in the country, where we were kindly entertained and spent the evening in comfort. As it happened to be the society's night, about eight o'clock a number of them gathered together and I expounded a chapter to them and was greatly blessed. When I had done, I expected the people would have gone away, but after supper I found most of them still waiting ; so I was glad to sing and pray again and found it difficult to get them away after all."

This society probably was at Evans's, which, Philip Gatch asserts, was the first that was formed in Baltimore County. Gatch himself was converted in the same county less than seven weeks prior to this date. "Two others," he says, "found peace the same evening, which made seven conversions in the neighborhood. I returned home happy in the love of God. I felt great concern for my parents, but I knew not what would be the result of my change. My father had threatened to drive me from home, and I knew that he was acquainted with what had taken place the night before, for he heard me in my exercises near three-quarters of a mile.

Up to this time my father was permitted to oppose me, but now God said by His Providence to the boisterous waves of persecution, 'Thou shalt go no farther.' He said to me while under conviction, 'There is your eldest brother; he has better learning than you, and if there is anything good in it why does not he find it out?' That brother was present when I received the blessing and became powerfully converted. My father inquired of him the next morning what had taken place at the meeting. He gave him the particulars, and wound up by saying if they did not all experience the same change, they would go to hell. This was a nail in a sure place." *

Perigo now preached at Gatch's father's. "He formed two classes in the neighborhood, and established a prayer-meeting at which both classes came together. By this time many had experienced religion." †

Williams seems to have been Pilmoor's companion much of the time that he was in rural Maryland in 1772. Williams well knew the ground and the people. The fact that he now accompanied Pilmoor towards Baltimore suggests that he was not a stranger to that city. Although there is no account of his having preached there, the presumption that he had is reasonable. Pilmoor, with his culture, his manly accomplishments and eloquence, was well fitted to make an abiding impression upon the chief towns in the region of the Chesapeake. In three of them, as we shall see, he founded Methodism.

* Judge McLean's Sketch of Gatch, pp. 13-14.

† Gatch, p. 16.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ORIGIN OF THE FIRST METHODIST SOCIETY IN BALTIMORE.

BALTIMORE, in 1772, was a town of about five thousand inhabitants, perhaps a few hundred more. From Griffith's "Annals of Baltimore" (page 62) we learn that in 1774 "a few gentlemen undertook a census of the town, and it was found that there were 564 houses and 5,934 persons of all descriptions." It was a place of some manufactures and considerable commerce in 1772. Religiously "the most obvious feature in Baltimore at the time the Methodists came here was diversity in its persuasions. Already in a population of a few thousands five congregations had been gathered and churches erected, no two of which were of the same denomination. Of these, St. Paul's Episcopal, built in 1744, and paid for out of the public treasury, was the oldest, wealthiest, and the most numerous, and the only one in the place that was lawful, all others being made tributary to its support." *

Joseph Pilmoor first entered Baltimore on Thursday, June 11, 1772. He was the first preacher formally appointed by Mr. Wesley to America that preached in that city, which so soon became a chief centre of the new movement. It is true we do not know with certainty what journeys Boardman may have taken prior to the above date, as we have but slight knowledge of his travels, except as we can trace them in the narrative of Pilmoor. There is, however, no intimation in any extant tradition or document that Boardman preceded Pilmoor to Maryland. Dr. Stevens asserts that Baltimore claims Strawbridge "as its Methodistic apostle," † but there is no evidence aside from probability that he

* The Rev. Dr. William Hamilton, *Methodist Quarterly Review*, July, 1856.

† *Hist. M. E. Church*, Vol. I., p. 78.

preached in that city prior to Pilmoor's visit. Probably Williams and King preached in Baltimore before Pilmoor, but they were not appointed to America in the formal way that Pilmoor and Boardman were. On reaching the city, Pilmoor "was kindly received by Mr. George Dagan, a Dutch merchant," who was "not forgetful to entertain strangers." Pilmoor intended to preach at once "abroad," but says "a heavy thunder-gust came on in the afternoon, which prevented it, so I was glad to accept of the Dutch Church, where I preached to a little company on 'So run that ye may obtain.'"

The next day, June 12, he "visited several families in the town, and did all in my power," he writes, "to recommend the *power of godliness*. In the evening I took my stand on a pleasant green near the Episcopal Church. Many people attended, among whom were two ministers, and all behaved in a manner becoming the business in which we were engaged. After preaching, several well-disposed persons met at my lodgings, and we spent an hour in Christian conversation, singing and prayer. The next day Josiah * Dallam came from the country to see me and our hearts were comforted together. At night I took my place on the green and declared to a larger company than we had last evening, 'Christ in you the hope of glory; whom we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.'"

On Sunday, June 14, Pilmoor preached in the Dutch Church to "a serious congregation," from the text, "A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." He afterwards "heard a Presbyterian minister *read* a pretty sermon." At two o'clock he preached in the Episcopal Church "and many seemed to *feel* the word." At seven o'clock he says "above a thousand people, many of them principal inhabitants, assembled on the green, and all behaved with the greatest decency while I published salvation for sinners through the blood of the Lamb. Monday,

* In MSS. left by the Rev. Dr. Robert Emory, Mr. Dallam's Christian name is spelled *Josias*.

June 15, he "spent some time in study, and at night described to a large congregation the blessedness of the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly," and delivered his testimony against the theatre. "As the players were in town," he says, "I thought it my duty to warn the people against them." When the service was over he "gave an exhortation at Mr. Dagan's to those who wished to be more fully instructed in the deep things of the Kingdom of God."

Pilmoor had service the next day at five o'clock in the morning. Above fifty people attended, to whom he "explained a part of the One hundred and nineteenth Psalm. In the afternoon," he writes, "I walked with several well-disposed people to a place about a mile from the town, called the Point, where many English people are settled for the convenience of the shipping, as the water is much deeper than at the town. As the weather was exceedingly hot I was glad to take my stand under a fine shady tree, and a fine congregation stood with the utmost attention while I showed the nature and necessity of repentance. From the deep seriousness of the hearers I was led to hope that the word had found its way to their hearts, and will hereafter produce a harvest of souls for our God. Wednesday and Thursday I was fully employed among the people and in public preaching, and had the happiness to find that I did not labor in vain. Friday, I read and explained the Rules of Society in public and showed the people the *design of Society meetings*. Saturday, as there had been much rain in the fore part of the day it was not convenient to preach abroad. So I went to the Dutch Church and the Lord gave his blessing to the word."

Pilmoor devoted the next Sabbath, June 21, 1772, to sacred labor in both city and country. He preached in the morning in Baltimore, and then rode in "a chaise" with Mr. Barnet "to a place called Baltimore Forest, where," he says, "I found about five hundred people assembled in the woods, so I immediately took my stand under a shady tree and had great liberty to explain the parable of the wheat and the tares. As I preached rather too long I was greatly fatigued

when I got to the town, but an hour's rest with the blessing of God restored me again, and I preached on the green to a larger congregation than ever. The Lord gave me power to preach, and all except one behaved very well. I spoke to him publicly, and he went off and stood playing with a child at a distance till I had done."

In this visit of Pilmoor to Baltimore we see an instance of the inadequacy of tradition as a historical guide. Tradition has preserved the fact of Pilmoor's presence in Baltimore and of his preaching out of doors near the Episcopal Church, and also that he was "a man of commanding appearance, an able and convincing preacher, and was listened to with much interest." In minor particulars, however, the tradition fails. "He addressed the people *once or twice* standing on the sidewalk as they came out of St. Paul's Church after morning service," says Dr. Hamilton in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, July, 1856. The truth is that he preached not merely *once or twice*, but for eleven days successively he labored in the city, preaching nearly, if not quite, every day, and on some days more than once. One day, Sunday, he preached three times in Baltimore. Then, after a return to the localities in the province which he visited before he went to the city, he went back and resumed the proclamation of the word to the Baltimoreans.

We have seen that he preached in churches as well as in the street. On his fourth day in Baltimore, Sunday, June 14, 1772, he preached in the Episcopal Church. The day he reached the city he preached in the Dutch Church, and he also preached in it on two subsequent occasions.

Of the time and the circumstances of the origin of the Methodist Society in Baltimore, we hitherto have had no precise knowledge. Neither Lee nor Bangs furnish any information on the subject, and the same is true of Lednum, Stevens, and McTyeire. Stevens does indeed convey the idea vaguely that King founded the cause in Baltimore, for after alluding to his preaching in St. Paul's Church, and his failure to get into its pulpit again, he says, "Methodism had now, however, entered Baltimore." But it is not certain that

King preached there before Pilmoor, and if he did he did not form a society. The same may be said concerning Williams, though it seems certain that he was in Baltimore before Pilmoor, because, as we have seen, Josias Dallam brought him to Deer Creek, which afterward was included in the county of Harford, and he went thither, as Dr. Dallam asserts, from Baltimore. As Williams was not a loiterer, the presumption is that, being in Baltimore, he preached. He went to Dallam's from Baltimore in 1769 or 1770, for he was the first Methodist preacher that lifted the Methodist standard at Deer Creek. Hamilton's studies availed nothing in determining when and by whom Methodism was regularly established in Baltimore, as in his paper on "Early Methodism in Maryland and Baltimore," in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, he gives no information concerning the beginning of the society in Baltimore. In Bishop Simpson's *Cyclopædia of Methodism* (page 566) is this assertion, namely: "No permanent society was established in Baltimore until the arrival of Francis Asbury, who devoted considerable time to that city." This I understand to mean that Asbury originated the first "permanent" Methodist society in that town. This assertion is incorrect, because Methodism was organized in Baltimore several months before Asbury first visited it, as Pilmoor's manuscripts abundantly prove. It is clear from Asbury's diary writings that he found a society there, but he gives no information as to its origin. Pilmoor was in that city five months at least before Asbury first entered it, and we shall now see that Pilmoor was the founder of Methodism in Baltimore.

On Monday, June 22, 1772, he met, he says, "a few serious persons in the Dutch Church, and proposed to form a society. Some of them resolved to give up themselves to the Lord, so I joined them together. In the evening I preached at the Point, and bear them witness they will receive sound doctrine. After preaching, I met the people, who desired it, in private, and we were so abundantly blessed that they also desired to be joined into a society. The earnestness with which they desired this made me conclude they

saw the necessity of it, so I joined twenty-five of them together, and there is a prospect of many more. May the Lord give them his blessing and daily add to their number such as shall be saved."

We thus see that Pilmoor formed a society in Baltimore proper, and also one at "the Point," contiguous, in the same day. The next day, June 23, he left the city for a short time. After his return he added fifteen to the society in Baltimore, which made forty members. "Some of these will, I hope, be to me a crown of rejoicing in the day of our Lord," exclaims the preacher. This was the society which Asbury found in Baltimore, but of which he was not the founder. It was formed in the Dutch Church, June 22, 1772, by Joseph Pilmoor.

Leaving Baltimore for a short time the day after he formed the society in that city, he again visited the societies in the country. His description of this trip affords vivid glimpses of the Methodist field in Maryland as it then was. "As I rode along," he says, "the distant thunder and lightning made me gladly accept of the invitation of a friend by the roadside to turn in with him, and it was well I did; for the dreadful gust soon reached us and the terrible flashes of lightning and loud peals of thunder bursting over us, together with the heavy rain, made me glad to be under shelter. When it was over my kind friend agreed to go with me, and about four o'clock we got to the place where I was to have preached. As they had appointed it at some distance, when I came there Mr. King was preaching, so I kept out of sight until he had done and then gave the people an exhortation and was greatly refreshed and comforted among them. Wednesday I preached at Bushtown with much freedom and peace, and spent the evening with my dear friend, Mr. Dallam, where I preached the next day, and on Friday went with several friends to a place near the Susquehanna, where we found a congregation waiting, to whom I explained the nature of *Spiritual religion*. Went home with a sensible, pious Quaker, at whose house a great many people assembled in the evening, and I had encouraging freedom of mind in speaking to them of God's

method of justifying sinners; and am in hopes the *wildness* that was likely to destroy the work will soon be effectually cured. Saturday, 27th, I was accompanied by several of the friends of Mr. Childs, a very rich Quaker, where many people of fashion attend and seem to think it their greatest honor to be followers of Jesus. After dinner I rode on to Mr. Dallam's, at Deer Creek, where I preached at five o'clock on 'Christ in you the hope of glory,' etc. The word was attended by the Spirit of the Lord and made a special blessing to the people."

He has now come to the last Sunday of June, 1772. A new chapel attracted him on the Sabbath morning, as it did three weeks before. As I have already said in a former part of this work, the conclusion seems warranted that the new chapel at which Pilmoor and Williams preached June seventh, was the same to which Pilmoor now went on the twenty-eighth of June. The only Wesleyan chapel in Maryland would naturally be a centre of interest to the Methodists of that province, and so it is not strange that Pilmoor was there with Williams the first Sunday he spent in Maryland, nor that he returned to it on this the last Sabbath, which during this visit he gave to the rural part of the province. Of the last Sunday of June, 1772, Pilmoor says: "We set off early in the morning [apparently from Deer Creek] for a new chapel,* where we found four times as many people as it would contain, so they made me a place in the wood, and I stood beneath the spreading branches of a stately oak and called the multitude to the gospel Bethesda, the spiritual house of Mercy, where all that come may obtain a perfect cure of all their diseases. After preaching was over the people were unwilling to go away; so I told them if they would wait till I got a little refreshment I would give them another discourse. I stepped to a cottage at a small distance and got a dish of tea, and then returned to the wood, where I found most of the people waiting. I preached again, and was particularly owned and blessed of God; but being obliged to speak pretty loud I was much fatigued and should have been

* Compare pp. 91-92 with this passage from Pilmoor.

glad of a little rest, but the time was not yet, for it had been appointed for me to preach above eight miles off. I hastened forward and found a great many more than the house could contain. So I was obliged to preach abroad a third time, and God gave me strength in that hour and caused our hearts to rejoice in his salvation. When I was done I was so exceedingly tired that I could hardly stand or speak. But it is for Christ and a day of rest is at hand."

Pilmoor preached at Deer Creek, at the house of Mr. Dallam, on the twenty-ninth of June. "We had a large and attentive congregation," he says. "My mind was much at liberty to declare the truth, and the people seemed to *feel* the word and to 'worship God in the Spirit.' I then hastened to Mr. Watters', where a large congregation was waiting in the barn, so I began without delay and explained part of the Sixty-first Chapter of Isaiah. My own soul was deeply affected with the subject, and most of the people wept much while I discoursed on the grand process of redeeming love as begun, carried on and completed by Immanuel, the sinners' Friend. Afterward spent the evening most comfortably with the family and several friends." Before leaving Henry Watters's house, near Deer Creek, the next morning Pilmoor inscribed a memento of his visit upon a window-pane, "which still remains," says Dr. Emory,* as follows:

"Soft peace she brings wherever she arrives,
She builds our quiet as she forms our lives,
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even
And opens in each heart a little heaven."

"תבון יהוה אלהינו"

"Exalt Jehovah, Our God."

"June 30, 1772."

"J. P."

The morning of June 30th "I set out with several friends," says Pilmoor, "for Mr. Baker's, at the Forks of Gunpowder, where we found a noble congregation, and as there was no

* This circumstance is related by Dr. Robert Emory in a manuscript yet preserved concerning Methodism in Harford County, Maryland. Whether the glass containing this inscription by Pilmoor, which had been kept until Dr. Emory's day, is still in existence I am not informed.

house that would near contain them I was glad to stand up in the woods, and the people were finely sheltered from the extreme heat of the sun by the spreading branches of the trees. Most of the gentry in the neighborhood were present and expressed the utmost satisfaction, and one of them took me home with him and entertained me with great hospitality."

Thus have we followed Pilmoor from his entrance into Maryland, on the fourth of June, 1772, to the end of that month. We have seen him preaching at Deer Creek; Richard Dallam's; Bushtown; Gunpowder Neck; Forks of Gunpowder; Mr. Bond's; a place not designated, which he found in the country as he went to Baltimore; Baltimore City; Fell's Point; Baltimore Forest; and at several other places. Most of these places he visited twice. Besides he twice visited the "new chapel" in Maryland and preached three sermons there.

He now saw the opening of the month of July, on the first day of which he went to Bond's, having "a pleasant journey through the woods." There he met a large congregation, to whom he preached on "the nature of Faith." He then "went home with Captain Jolley," where he says "I spent the evening with the utmost pleasure and satisfaction. I love much to converse with people of good sense and pleasing address, but my call is to go forward to preach the gospel to the poor. Took leave of the family and went forward with Henry Johns to Mr. Perigo's. God sent a refreshing shower of heavenly consolation while I was preaching." He then went to Mr. Woodward's, where he "was kindly entertained and slept in peace."

Pilmoor returned to Baltimore on Friday, July third, 1772, "ready to faint with the heat," after an absence of ten days, in which he abounded in labor. That night he preached in the town, and also on the night following. On Sunday, July 5, he preached in the country again, but the place is not designated, and he returned to Baltimore the same evening and preached on the Green, where he says "it was remarkably pleasant." The congregation was large.

The next day he preached at "the Point," and the day

after to "a listening multitude in the town." Then, on Wednesday, July 8th, 1772, he "went to preach again at Mr. Woodward's." There he had "a time of refreshing," and then returned to Baltimore "in the night for fear of the heat on the morrow."

He had an appointment to meet the society on Thursday, the ninth, "in the Dutch Church." Many besides the members attended; "so," says Pilmoor, "I gave a general exhortation and afterward met the class, and knowing that people are apt to speak many disrespectful things of our private meetings, I was glad that several strangers were present while I spoke to the members, and were so far from objecting that they expressed the highest approbation. So I joined fifteen to the society, which now consists of forty members." "There is now," he writes, "an open door in this town, and nothing is wanted but a good, zealous preacher, for the people are well affected to the cause of God and wish us prosperity in the name of the Lord. My heart is much united with them, and I would like to continue longer in these parts, but the 'tutelary cloud' moves southward and I am called to go forward."

Pilmoor left Baltimore on Friday, July 10, 1772, for Virginia. He prepared for his journey, "took leave of my dear friends in Baltimore," he says, "and about one o'clock set off for Annapolis. As the weather was hot and the road sandy, our horse failed us within seven miles of the city. We were obliged to put up at a poor cottage by the roadside, where our accommodations were very bad. We could get nothing for the horse but a few blades of Indian corn, which we stripped off, and we ourselves were uncomfortable enough. But it is now over, and I received no other damage than catching a little cold. The next morning we set off and about ten o'clock arrived in the city." Pilmoor was conveyed from Baltimore to Annapolis by a young man in a "chaise." He did not know one person in the town, and so was at a loss as to how he should proceed to get a place for preaching. "While we were at dinner in the Coffee-house," he says, "a young store-keeper came in who expressed a desire to hear, and readily went with me about the town to look out for a convenient place.

As we walked along I observed a very large tree in a fine piece of ground, where many people might stand in the shade. We made application, and readily obtained leave of the owner to preach under it that night. So I sent the bell-man around the town to inform the inhabitants and at seven o'clock had a fine congregation."

The next day—Sunday, July 12—he had a small audience "in the field" at eight o'clock in the morning. He attended the church service twice. In the evening he preached under the large tree to "a vast multitude" on the Gospel Bethesda, and closed the day with prayer at the Coffee-house. He was anxious to leave for Norfolk, and on Monday morning he "went down to the water side" to look for a boat, but found none. "An old gentleman offered to send me for eight pounds," he said, "but I thought it was very extravagant and therefore resolved to wait." He accepted a friendly invitation of a young man to breakfast, where he met "some very agreeable people, with whom I spent an hour comfortably." He preached in the evening to a very good congregation, "who were remarkably attentive" while he discoursed to them from the text: "Christ our Passover, slain for us." He remarks, however, that "I do not find myself at liberty, nor have I near so much satisfaction in preaching *here* as in most other places where I have been." He "breakfasted" next morning "with the Rev. Mr. Montgomery at his lodgings."

Thus was Methodist preaching introduced into Annapolis. All the Wesleyan travelling preachers who up to that time had visited Maryland were Strawbridge, Williams, King, and now Pilmoor. It is doubtful whether any Methodist preacher was before Pilmoor in proclaiming the Gospel to the citizens of Annapolis. His sermon under the large tree, July 11, 1772, probably was the first Methodist sermon ever preached in that town.

On Tuesday, July 14, 1772, Pilmoor "spent a profitable hour with my landlady at the Coffee-house," he says, "who behaved the most like a Christian of any I have met with in the town. When I had gotten my things ready and wanted my bill she told me I was perfectly welcome to what I had

had at her house, and begged I would make use of it whenever I came to Annapolis. She also sent provisions on board the boat for me on my passage, and we parted in great peace and friendship. About 12 o'clock I embarked and we sailed immediately, but the wind turning right ahead we were obliged to cast anchor and wait for the turning of the tide. While we waited, the negroes, who were all the companions I had, proposed going ashore, which I gladly consented to do, and had a fine opportunity of bathing in the salt water. Wednesday we had a pretty breeze and dropped down the Bay about twenty miles. On Thursday the clouds gathered thick around us and soon burst in dreadful peals of thunder, but we received no other damage than being a good deal terrified with the tremendous flashes of lightning. About sunset we crossed the mouth of the Potomac and had a fair wind all night and on Friday morning found ourselves in Hampton Roads, about fifteen miles from the desired port. About seven o'clock I landed safe at Norfolk."

CHAPTER XIX.

PILMOOR IN VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA, AND THE FOUNDING OF METHODISM IN PORTSMOUTH AND NORFOLK.

JOSEPH PILMOOR first entered Virginia on the seventeenth of July, 1772, and was kindly received by Mr. William Stephenson, a Scotchman, who invited him to his house before he left New York. The same evening he opened his mission in Norfolk with a sermon in the "Playhouse." The congregation was small and so was the promise of success. He preached again the following evening on the Nature of Repentance. He preached at Portsmouth "under a fine shady tree" on Sunday morning, the twenty-sixth of July, on "The One Thing Needful," and the word was with power. That afternoon, in the theatre at Norfolk, he preached to "most of the genteel people" of the town on the Gospel Bethesda. He passed the evening with a Mr. Haldane, who had but lately come from Philadelphia. The next day he received a call from the Rev. Mr. Davis, "rector of Norfolk," and their conversation was about religion. Pilmoor preached to a large assembly the same evening.

His health was now reduced, and he attributed it to the badness of the water and the change of climate. The next day (July 28th) he was so ill that he was sorrowfully obliged to disappoint a congregation at Portsmouth. A stranger sent him something, which gave him relief, and he soon resumed his beloved work.

He met "a lovely congregation" at seven in the morning, in the Norfolk Theatre, on the last Sunday of July, 1772, and afterward was much edified in hearing Mr. Davis at the church. At night the theatre in Norfolk would not hold half of the people, so Pilmoor preached in the open air. This

was by far the largest congregation he had met since he left Philadelphia. The next day (Monday) "I had a good time at Portsmouth," he says, "and Tuesday went about five miles into the woods to William Owen's, where I found a pretty congregation waiting for me, to whom I preached the gospel of God." Mr. Owen was a helper of the cause. William Watters soon came to Norfolk to join Pilmoor in the work, and he says, "William Owen was one of my great confidants, and often refreshed my spirits. His house was at all times a home for me." *

Pilmoor had "a vast multitude of attentive hearers" in Captain Good's yard, at Portsmouth, at ten o'clock Sunday, August 9, 1772. The same evening he was at the theatre in Norfolk, where he met an exciting episode. The assembly was very large, but as the ground was so wet he was advised to preach indoors. Men were appointed to keep all the negroes out until the white people were admitted, for whom there was not sufficient room. Pilmoor began the service, but soon a plank gave way "and the stage on which the pulpit was fixed began to sink down at one side," he says, "which so terrified the people that they cried out amain. As I perceived it would be impossible to quiet the people, I slipped out, ordered a table, and began singing on the large plain adjoining the house. This happened to be the very thing. The people drew out of the house and I had a noble congregation of white and black, to whom I freely declared the whole counsel of God."

The next Sunday he preached in the morning at Norfolk and then went to Portsmouth, where he met the largest congregation he had seen there. He dined with "a great merchant," Mr. Sproul, at Gosport, and received marked kindness. After dinner he was sent over the river in the family boat and reached Norfolk in time for evening preaching. The white people filled the house, "and a vast multitude of black people stood around about the outside." The word on Pilmoor's lips was "like a sharp two-edged sword piercing into the hearts of sinners." The third day after this he "was chiefly em-

* Life of Watters.

ployed in conversation with the people, who begin," he says, "to desire instruction in the things pertaining to salvation."

He now sailed for Williamsburg, Va., where he enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. Dean, a coach-maker from New York. Pilmoor gathered a small congregation on the evening of his arrival, which appears to have been August 21, 1772. On Sunday, the twenty-second, he heard a useful sermon at the church and the rector invited him to dine. In the evening he preached to a multitude in the State House yard. "As the minister himself was to hear, and treated me so genteelly," says Pilmoor, "the rest of the people were ashamed to do anything uncivil." The next morning Pilmoor was ill, but was so much better in the afternoon that he preached to a vast crowd of people in the playhouse. Of the success of his ministry in Williamsburg, then the capital of Virginia, he says: "'Tis surprising what a change there is in this place in a few days. When I came few cared anything about the preaching, but now abundance of people are not only glad to hear it, but also willing to receive it."

From Williamsburg he went to Yorktown, August 24th, 1772. Being unknown there he put up at a public house, where he met several young men of the College of William and Mary, in Williamsburg, one of whom made some observations on theology, which drew from Pilmoor an adroit reply. The young collegian he says "began an argument about creeds, and pretended that he could not believe anything he did not understand. I told him the advocates for Natural Religion were under the same disadvantage in that respect as those who believe in Revealed Religion, for there are many things in Nature which every philosopher most certainly believes, and yet can no more understand or account for them than we can understand the doctrine of the Trinity, so that herein they have no cause to triumph over the Trinitarians at all." In the afternoon Pilmoor preached at Yorktown, "in the dining-room, to a pretty large congregation of very genteel hearers, and by the seriousness of the people had good hope that my labor was not in vain." During the delivery of this sermon he was taken ill, and became worse,

so that he had to take to his bed. The next morning, however, he began his journey to Hampton, where he found himself much better.

At Hampton he asked for and obtained the use of a large dining-room, and sent out word to the people that he would preach, and at the time appointed a fine congregation came. "But just as I was preparing to preach," he says, "I was seized with a severe fit of the ague. However, as the people were gathered I resolved to preach if possible, went immediately into the room and gave out a hymn and then kneeled down in prayer, but was so very sick that I had like to have fallen down on the floor. Being unable to stand I told the people if they would permit me to sit down I would try to preach. The fever was so hot upon me that I was almost scorched and could hardly hold up my head; yet the Lord gave me uncommon clearness in my ideas, and his blessing attended in a special manner while I was trying to snatch poor souls as brands out of the fire. The people were greatly affected."

Among the hearers on this occasion was Captain Brickell, of Norfolk, whose family constantly attended the preaching. The Captain, however, greatly disapproved of the Methodists. When he left his family, a few days previously, he requested them never to hear Methodist preaching again. He was so moved under the sermon Pilmoor preached in such weakness of body at Hampton, and was so thoroughly convinced of the truth, that before sailing "to the West Indies, he left the ship in the Roads and went to Norfolk to entreat his wife and family never to miss a sermon, but to constantly attend the preaching at all opportunities." Pilmoor declares that the Captain "became one of the best men I ever met with in any part of the world." About three months after the change was wrought in him under Pilmoor's unctuous sermon at Hampton, William Watters, as we shall see, went to Norfolk. In going to Conference at Deer Creek, in 1777, Watters says: "I met with my friend, Captain Brickell, from Norfolk. It brought to my mind the days that were past, when in weakness and in much fear and trembling I first saw him and his

family.”* Thomas Rankin, in a letter to Mr. Wesley, says that on June 24, 1776, he “left Leesburg, Va., in company with Wright Brickell, a truly devout man, who now rests from his labors.”† This man may have been the Captain Brickell of Pilmoor's narrative; if he was he died in less than six years from the time that his mind was so graciously wrought upon under the discourse delivered by Pilmoor in such physical infirmity at Hampton.

From Hampton Pilmoor went by boat to Norfolk. There he suffered another attack of the ague and fever, but made full proof of his ministry. The last Sunday in August, 1772, he felt better and sent word to the people in the afternoon that he would try to preach in the evening. A very large congregation soon gathered, and “though my legs could hardly stand under me,” he says, “I found my soul greatly refreshed. While I have breath I will gladly publish salvation to sinners through the blood of the Lamb. If he is exalted I am fully satisfied whether it be by life or by death; for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” The next night he was better, and after preaching he “read the rules of the society in public and had a multitude to hear,” which he says “afforded me a fine opportunity of explaining many things respecting our discipline which people in general do not understand. This was made a singular blessing to many and effectually removed prejudice from their minds.”

There was a good audience at Portsmouth on the morning of Sunday, September 12, 1772, to whom Pilmoor preached, more alarmingly than he had ever done, on the latter part of the twenty-fifth of St. Matthew. In the evening the congregation at Norfolk “was abundantly larger and the people were all attention.” The ensuing night he preached again at Norfolk and the next night at Portsmouth, where “abundance of people heard the word.” The following day (September 15) several persons came to accompany him to the country. “The weather was fine,” he says, “and we had a most agreeable journey through the groves of pine trees in-

* Watters's Life, p. 56.

† A Brief Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Virginia. London, 1778.

termingled with stately oaks. In the afternoon we had a fine congregation under the shady trees, and a deep seriousness sat upon every countenance while I explained and improved the story of Zacheus, the publican. My heart was so drawn out with desire for their salvation that I continued speaking about two hours, and I believe not in vain. Afterwards I walked through the woods to visit a poor man who had been confined to his room for eight years. As many of the neighbors came in I gave them an exhortation. We returned to Mr. Randle's. In the morning we went to the house of a poor widow, where I had appointed to preach, and found a great number of people gathered from various quarters, whom I invited to come to Christ. About five o'clock returned safe to Portsmouth."

The congregation at Portsmouth was much larger than the house would contain on Sunday, September 19, 1772. Pilmoor preached from a table in Captain Good's yard. Then he heard a discourse at the church which led him to express the fear that "an historical account of Darius and Alexander the Great will never bring poor sinners to an acquaintance with Jesus." The next day he was at the Western Branch, where at a Mr. Grimes's he preached on blind Bartimeus with such effect that the people wept for their sins and cried for mercy. He continued in the country until Saturday. The Sunday ensuing the congregation overflowed the house at Portsmouth; the women were within and the men without. At night the house was crowded at Norfolk.

Pilmoor kept his eye upon the outlying country and sought therein new fields of labor. On the twenty-seventh of September, 1772, he says: "I took leave of my dear friends for a little while and set out for North Carolina. The day was very hot and my way was through the woods. I called at many little houses on the road, but could get nothing for my horse till late in the afternoon, when I found a little ordinary, where I stopped to dine. I resolved to stop there all night. In the evening several young countrymen came in who desired to speak with me, and we spent our time in agreeable conversation, singing, and prayer." Next morning he resumed

his journey, and a little before noon reached Carrituck Court House, in North Carolina. He "began without delay, and declared to Churchmen, Baptists, and Presbyterians, 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' God made his word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. The poor people expressed the utmost gratitude," says Pilmoor, "and Colonel Williams invited me to dine. As it was in my way, I gladly accepted the offer, and found one of the prettiest places I have seen in North Carolina. I was entertained with true primitive hospitality." In the morning he went about five miles to a small chapel, where he had a very good time in preaching and prayer.

Colonel Williams and Pilmoor travelled about twenty miles, to the Narrows Chapel, on the twenty-ninth of September, 1772. The road lay through the woods, and was rough and perilous. At the chapel they had a very solemn time. Pilmoor asserts that "the poor ignorant people were greatly affected. One poor old man came to me with tears in his eyes, thanking me for what he had heard, and begged me to accept of some money to help me along. I told him I was not in want, and begged him to excuse me, but nothing would satisfy him without I would take it as a token of his Christian regard and love of the gospel of Christ. We then mounted, and hastening on our way, in the evening came safe to Colonel Williams's." This was not only a day of long travel, but also of enforced abstinence. Of it Pilmoor wrote: "As I had travelled above fifty miles without any other refreshment than a bit of bread and a little water, and exerted myself pretty much in preaching, I was sufficiently tired. But it is for Jesus."

The next day, September 30th, he left Williams's home and rode to a new church on the border of Virginia, where he preached "to a large congregation of weeping sinners." The following day was the Sabbath, and after family prayer, Pilmoor, in very rough weather, crossed the bay in a canoe, and then walked over the fields to the meeting-house, where he "had a congregation of Baptists and others, who were all attention." From that meeting-house he rode about eight

miles further, and showed to "a fine congregation the way of salvation, and spent the evening in conversation with Christian friends." The ensuing day he started early for Kemp's Landing, above twenty miles distant, where he arrived in time to preach at noon. The meeting was at the public house. There was to be a horse-race in the afternoon, and before Pilmoor left the tavern he spoke of the absurdity of such sport, "and showed how ridiculous it is for gentlemen of sense to ride many miles to see two or three horses run about a field with negroes on their backs." When he called for his bill, the host politely declined to receive pay. In the evening Pilmoor was again in Norfolk.

He at once resumed his work in that town. On the third of October he preached in the theatre, and on the fifth at Portsmouth, "and visited a poor dying sinner." Some friends from Williamsburg visited him, and urged him to go there again, which led him to hope that his ministry in the capital of Virginia had not been unfruitful. On Sunday morning, the eighth of October, he preached in the Norfolk theatre; in the afternoon to "a vast multitude in Captain Good's yard," at Portsmouth; and in the evening "to the great congregation in Norfolk, and took much pains to convince them we are all debtors; that we owe to God ten thousand talents and more, but are in ourselves totally insolvent, and therefore should look to and heartily accept of our divine Surety, Christ Jesus, whose boundless love wipes away the debt immense when we have nought to pay."

He now began to see evidence of the saving effect of the word he had proclaimed. The ninth of October he gave some time to his studies, visited the people, "and had one to speak with me," he says, "about the salvation of his soul. This is a rare thing in Norfolk, and I hope it will not long be so. Many are clearly convinced of the truth, but as yet they are ashamed of the cross, and fear the reproach that attends the gospel." He heard that a gentleman who constantly waited upon his ministry had reported that he preached justification by faith, "which is a strange thing in Norfolk," he writes. "So I took some pains to explain and

confirm it, both by the Scriptures and the doctrinal articles of the Church." On October seventeenth he preached on "I will show thee my faith by my works," and trusted that he convinced his hearers that they were mistaken in charging him "with being an enemy to good works."

He now went with a Mr. Randall to New Mill Creek, about fifteen miles from Norfolk. He preached, and the people desired him to give them another sermon, which he did in about an hour, and even then, he says, "they were unwilling to part; so many of them went with me to see two very old people who are sick," and whom "I found better acquainted with the plan of salvation than most I have met with in Virginia. We all united in calling upon God." The last day of this week—October 21, 1772—he preached at a Mr. Wilkins's; "the hearts of the people melted, and tears flowed abundantly from their eyes." He then went to Portsmouth and preached "with zeal and power," and the next morning—Sunday—preached there again. In the afternoon he addressed "a vast congregation at Norfolk."

He started again for the country the next day, and preached at Captain O'Connor's, whither he went on a boat. The following day he preached at Mrs. Buxton's, at Naneymond, where he had been before, and the ensuing day he preached again, after which he went to Mr. Hughes's, where he met the largest congregation he had ever seen in that place. Next day he dined with Mr. Sproul, the merchant, at Gosport, and in the evening preached to a large audience. The day after this he returned to Norfolk and preached on justification by faith.

Thus Pilmoor continued to abound in labor day by day, in town and country. On the thirteenth of November, 1772, he preached at the Great Bridge to many people. "All were deeply serious," he says, "and stood quietly till I had done, when I had much conversation with one who is troubled in mind, whom I endeavored to lead to Christ. As most of the congregation stood by while I was speaking with her, I desired them all to join with me in prayer for her. We kneeled down upon the grass, and God gave me great freedom of

mind to plead with him for her, and I left her in hope of salvation." The next day he returned to Portsmouth, and at night "had a vast multitude to hear, to whom" he "explained the Rules of the Society."

We come now to an important day in the history of Virginia, namely, the organization of the first two Methodist Societies within its borders of which we have record. Robert Williams was in Virginia before Pilmoor, and he brought "a flaming account of the work there" to Philadelphia in the spring of 1772.* But while Williams preached in Virginia somewhat in advance of Pilmoor, it does not appear that he formed any societies within its bounds until 1774. Lee assigns the beginning of Williams's work in Norfolk to the early part of the year 1772, which, no doubt, is the correct date, save that in the summer of 1769, immediately after landing from Europe, he opened his ministry in America in that town, as we have seen, from the steps of a vacant house. His appearance there in 1772, as described by Jesse Lee, was very much like the opening of his mission there in 1769, as described by Dr. Dallam, of Maryland.† Concerning his appearance in Norfolk in the early part of 1772, Jesse Lee says: "Without any previous notice being given, he went to the court-house. Standing on the steps and beginning to sing, the people collected together. After prayer, he took his text and preached to a considerable number of hearers, who were very disorderly.‡ They all thought the preacher was a madman, and while he was preaching the people were laughing, talking, and walking about in all directions. The general conclusion was that they never heard such a man before, for they said sometimes he would preach, then he would pray, then he would swear, and at times he would cry. The people were so little used to hearing a preacher say hell or devil in preaching that they thought he was swearing when he told them about going to hell or being damned if they died in their sins. As he was believed to be a madman none

* See Asbury's Journal, Vol. I., page 28.

† See pages 102-104, inclusive.

‡ See page 359.

of them invited him to their houses. However, he preached at the same place the next day, when they found out he was not insane, and they were glad to get him to their houses. This may be considered the beginning of Methodism in Virginia, and it was not long before a Methodist Society was formed in the town of Norfolk." *

Nearly a year passed after Williams began his fruitful labors in Virginia, in 1772, before there was a society in Norfolk. Williams did not found one, nor did any exist until four months lacking one day after Pilmoor opened his ministry in that town. This shows us that preaching steadily for weeks or months in a place where Methodism was unknown was one thing and the formation of a society from such hearers was another. Embury quickly formed a society after he began to preach in New York, but the persons who composed it at first were mostly, if not wholly, like himself, Methodist immigrants from Ireland, who were aroused to a renewal of their consecration by Barbara Heck. As it was nearly a year from the time Williams began preaching in Norfolk in 1772, with Pilmoor following him, before a society was formed there, it is highly probable that Strawbridge had to preach a while in Maryland before he brought a Methodist society into existence at Pipe Creek. Ploughing and sowing precede the shocking of sheaves.

Lee apparently did not know the date of the origin of the society in Norfolk. He apparently supposed that Williams formed it, but does not distinctly say so. His biographer, Dr. Leroy M. Lee, however, inaccurately says Williams formed a society in Norfolk in 1772.† Bennett, in his "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia," says: "To Robert Williams belongs the honor of planting Methodism in Virginia." An example of the errors which have crept into nearly all of the histories of Methodism in this country is that which Bishop McTyeire has set forth as follows: "Pilmoor went southward. From Norfolk he extended his trip to Charleston and Savannah. No societies were planted by him." ‡ Dr. Stevens says Will-

* History of Methodism, p. 40.

† Life and Times of Jesse Lee, p. 45.

‡ McTyeire's History of Methodism, pp. 296-297.

iams was the "founder of Methodism in Virginia" and implies that he founded it in Norfolk.*

Pilmoor did found societies in the South, as we shall now see, but there is no evidence that Williams formed any in Virginia, until about the time that Pilmoor and Boardman left the country and returned to England. Jesse Lee distinctly says that "in the beginning of 1774, Robert Williams *began* to form societies in Virginia, and made out a plan for a six weeks' circuit, which extended from Petersburg over Roanoke River some distance into North Carolina."†

The precise time of the actual founding of Methodism in Virginia has not hitherto been known. The discovery of Pilmoor's manuscript narrative of his ministry in this country, under Mr. Wesley, has established many facts which were not previously confirmed. It has also brought to our knowledge many significant and interesting things concerning of which nothing was known. Among these is the fact that he, and not Robert Williams, founded Methodism south of the Potomac. The first society in Virginia of which there is any record was not in Norfolk, but in Portsmouth. It was formed on the fourteenth day of November, 1772. Of its origin Pilmoor gives the following account:

"Had a vast multitude [in Portsmouth] to hear me read and explain the Rules of the Society. When I had done, as they have been deeply convinced of their need of a Saviour and are truly desirous to flee from the wrath to come, I joined twenty-seven of them who are determined to seek the Lord while he may be found."

The society at Norfolk was formed two days later. Of that event, so interesting and potent in the history of Southern Methodism, Pilmoor furnishes the account which here follows:

"Thursday, 16 [November, 1772]. Having proposed to form a society in Norfolk I went to the preaching house and gave an exhortation on the nature and necessity of meeting together to help build each other up in the faith of the gos-

* Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. I., pp. 85, 87, 290.

† Lee's History of the Methodists, p. 51.

pel. I then withdrew to Captain Carson's, where I laid the foundation of a society by joining twenty-six of them together, who are likely to war a good warfare and obtain the victory through the blood of the Lamb. This makes my heart right glad and causes me to rejoice in God my Saviour. I have long wept and prayed that God would raise up a people in this place, and now my prayer is answered, and I clap my hands exultingly in Hallelujahs to the Lord, the King."

The two societies which Joseph Pilmoor organized in the twin cities of Portsmouth and Norfolk on Tuesday and Thursday, respectively, November fourteenth and sixteenth, 1772, are believed to have been the first in Virginia—at least there is no record of any societies that were earlier. Dr. Stevens says Williams "did for Methodism in Virginia what Embury did for it in New York and Strawbridge in Maryland," * which is saying that he founded it there. Stevens also declares that the society in Norfolk was "the germ of the denomination in the State;" † therefore, as he asserts that Williams founded Methodism in Virginia, and also that the Norfolk society was its germ, he in effect asserts that Williams formed that society. We now know that this is incorrect. The errors which so long have been rife on this subject are now dissipated by the hand of Pilmoor, from whom we derive the facts respecting the origin of Methodism in Portsmouth and Norfolk. We witness the scenes, we see the preacher welcoming the candidates and joining them in sacred fellowship according to Methodism.

In the autumn of 1772 William Watters went forth to preach. He has narrated the circumstances attending his entrance upon the itinerancy in his volume of interesting reminiscences. Besides the other valuable services he rendered to American Methodism, Robert Williams introduced Watters into its ministry. Watters says: "Being fully persuaded of my call to the ministry, and that it was my duty to go wherever a kind Providence should point out the way, I cheerfully accepted the invitation of that pious servant of the

* Stevens's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. I., p. 87.

† Ibid., p. 85.

Lord, Robert Williams, and set out with him and under his care in October, 1772, for Norfolk, in Virginia, being just twenty-one years of age, having known the Lord seventeen months, and been exhorting about five or six."

They held meetings in several places before they reached Baltimore, where they passed the Sabbath. There Watters preached, which was "the third time," he says, "of my speaking from a text." Asbury had not then seen Baltimore, but not long afterwards he made his first appearance in that part of Maryland where Pilmoor labored the preceding summer.

From Baltimore Williams and Watters proceeded southward. At Bladenburg, says Watters, "the landlord was exceedingly attentive to us, and received a word of exhortation with apparent thankfulness, but appeared a stranger to heart-religion." At Georgetown Williams preached one evening "to a large room full of the inhabitants." Thence they crossed the Potomac to Virginia, and went by way of Alexandria to King William Court House. There a Mr. Martin invited them to lodgings, and also to preach the following day, which was the Sabbath. Watters says "Mr. Williams preached there in the forenoon, and at the Court House in the afternoon. The congregations, seeing they had but a few hours' notice, were tolerably large, but discovered great ignorance of experimental religion." They found Mrs. Martin, the wife of their host, "under some awakenings, and endeavored to advise and encourage her." A near neighbor invited them to lodge with him, and showed them "all the hospitality of a Virginian." As they journeyed thence Williams preached several times, "and made it a point," says Watters, "to introduce religious conversation at every convenient opportunity as we rode or sat at the fireside in taverns and in private houses. We found very few in the course of three hundred miles who knew experimentally anything of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Watters does not give the date of their arrival at Norfolk, but Pilmoor tells us that it was November 18, 1772. The day after he formed the Norfolk Society Pilmoor spent the

morning in study, and afterward visited the family of Captain Campbell, in Norfolk, where he found several more who desired to be received into the society. He preached in the evening and the next day, Saturday, November 18th, "I went over the water with Mr. Williams and Mr. Watters, who arrived here to-day," says Pilmoor. They met the society "over the water," * though not in private, and Pilmoor admitted several new members.

Williams and Watters were received by the Norfolk friends very kindly. The latter, however, was not favorably impressed by the religious tone of the Methodists at Norfolk, who had just been united into a society. Pilmoor strove to check what he deemed the excessive exhibitions of fervor by the Methodists in Maryland, among whom Watters lived; and it may be taken for granted that he did not train his Virginia converts after their model.

"Such Methodists," Watters declares, "I had never seen, nor did I suppose there were such upon earth. My experience and warm feelings led me to conclude that all who bore the name must be like those with whom I had been acquainted in the neighborhood I had left. Many hundreds attended preaching, but were the most hardened, wild, and ill-behaved of any people I had ever beheld." He thought the prospect was better in Portsmouth, but did not think the work was very thorough in either town. The ardent young preacher did not sufficiently appreciate the condition of those whom he criticised, who were but just becoming acquainted with Methodism. We can see how Watters quickly received an unfavorable impression of the Norfolk people. Pilmoor says that on the twentieth of November, 1772, he "had a comfortable meeting with the preachers at Mr. Stephenson's. In the evening Mr. Williams preached, but the people disliked him so that they made a most horrible noise, so that I was obliged to go and sit among them to keep them in order. When they saw me they were ashamed, and behaved very well the rest of the time." Such rude behavior by a congre-

* This I understand to have been Portsmouth, which is "over the water" of the Elizabeth River from Norfolk.

gation was not calculated to give a fervent young itinerant a very favorable opinion of their piety. This occasion was only two days after the arrival of Williams, and the dislike shown to him, therefore, must have been excited in them when he was in Norfolk previously, at which time, as we have seen, they inferred from his language and manner in his introductory sermon that he was not in his right mind.*

Williams preached in the morning after his arrival, which was Sunday, November 19, 1772, and Pilmoor preached at Norfolk the same night to a congregation which was "very large, and wild enough in the beginning, but a solemn awe soon seized upon them, and all were still until the sermon was done." The last Sunday night of November Pilmoor preached at Norfolk to a very large assembly, and the next day he "devoted to study and to visiting the people, whom God has awakened." The day after this he preached in Portsmouth, where, he declares, "prejudice is generally removed, and the people gladly receive the truth. Wednesday, as Mr. Williams was to preach, I was glad to take my place among the people to prevent confusion, and had the happiness to see them behave pretty well till near the conclusion, when some of them were a little noisy, but nothing like what was expected." The Norfolk audiences, it seems, were prone to be rowdyish when Williams addressed them.

Watters "set off for the country to preach" on the twenty-third of November, and Pilmoor "met the society and joined four new members, who bid fair for the kingdom of heaven." Afterward two men invited him to preach at Pasquatauk, in North Carolina.

In relation to the prospect in this Southern field, and of the importance of staying to nurture the germinating seed of the word, Pilmoor thus speaks: "The longer I stay in these parts the more I am desired to preach, and have by far the greater success. Frequent changes among gospel preachers may keep up the spirits of some kinds of people, but are never likely to promote the spirit of the gospel, nor increase true religion. Had I left Norfolk when some persons would

* See pages 354-355.

have had me, I should have formed no society, either there or at Portsmouth. Now we have a goodly company in each place."

Watters left the town after a few weeks, "and went into the country to form, if possible, a small circuit, but was soon much discouraged to see the stupid blindness and the brutal wickedness of the people." Yet he was treated in the main respectfully, and met with little opposition. "My soul," says Watters, "longed day and night to see the words of the Lord sinking deep into the hearts of the people, and until this was the case I could but mourn and give myself to fasting and prayer. In a few places I met with some little encouragement, and a few faithful, though afflicted, friends, with whom I often took sweet counsel. My good friend, William Owen, was one of my great confidants, and often refreshed my spirits. His house was at all times a home for me while in a distant country." With this gentleman Pilmoor also enjoyed pleasant intercourse, and found hospitality in his country home.

Pilmoor soon left Norfolk and journeyed southward. Watters's narrative is not well punctuated with dates, therefore it is less useful to the historian than otherwise it would be. He errs in saying that Pilmoor started from Norfolk for the remote South "in the latter part of the winter;" he should have said in the *early* part of it. Watters probably wrote from memory many years after the event. Another example is this of the persistent faultiness of tradition.

The last day of November, 1772, Pilmoor was preparing for his journey to South Carolina, but was still subjected to delay. "I have been waiting here for several weeks," he writes, "but something or other has always happened to keep me in these parts longer than I intended. I am resigned, as I hope it is the guiding hand of the Lord. Friday [December 1], after visiting the people, I preached in the evening with great freedom. Saturday I preached in Portsmouth, and found the people in a prosperous way and greatly confirmed in the doctrines of grace. My heart begins to unite with these dear affectionate people more than ever."

Robert Williams had an appointment "over the water"

on December fifth, and Pilmoor went to hear him. "When he saw me," says the latter, "he would not preach, so I was obliged to preach for him. Afterward I spent the evening at Colonel Veal's, where I am as happy as if I belonged to the family." When Pilmoor returned he found that Mr. Taylor had brought him a single-horse chaise, with which he was "to travel to Charleston." This was necessary, he says, "as I shall be obliged to carry provender for the horse and food for myself, on account of the long and dreary stages through the woods. The following day I was much taken up in preparing for my journey to the South, and settling things relating to the work of the Lord in these parts."

Pilmoor preached at Portsmouth on Sunday morning, the twelfth of December, 1772. The same night at Norfolk, "notwithstanding the severe cold, we had a very large congregation," he writes, "to hear my farewell sermon. My heart was greatly affected at the thought of leaving them."

The labors of that Sunday being over, in the retirement of his chamber, amid the silence of night, Pilmoor seriously and gratefully reviewed the period he had spent in Norfolk. "I found great cause of thankfulness," he says, "(1) that I had been enabled to preach the whole counsel of God without being moved by the fear of man; (2) that I was clear of the blood of sinners; (3) that I have been preserved by the grace of God from sinning against him and dishonoring his cause; (4) that I have not labored in vain. The face of things is wonderfully changed for the better, and near forty persons are joined in society, most of whom will I trust be my crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord."

He took leave of his "weeping friends" in Norfolk, Monday, December 13, 1772, and the same evening "preached my farewell sermon in Portsmouth," he writes. "I had great engagedness of heart, and continued preaching near two hours to a people who seem as if they would continue till the break of day hearing the word and wrestling with God in prayer." The following day, December 14, 1772, in company with Robert Williams, he ate breakfast at Colonel Veal's and proceeded on his journey southward, preaching as he went.

CHAPTER XX.

PILMOOR'S JOURNEY TO CHARLESTON AND SAVANNAH.

PILMOOR was still following his "tutelary cloud." Reaching the residence of Mr. Hughes, many friends who heard of his arrival went thither, and after singing and prayer they affectionately parted. Pushing on, he came to New Mill Creek, fifteen miles from Norfolk, where he passed the night in the home of a Mr. Jeffrey.

Here he felt the magnitude of the adventure upon which he had entered, but was undismayed. "The difficulties before me appeared very great," he writes, "but my trust was in God and he will provide." The next day he reached Mr. Randle's, where he "preached and the word was sent with power to the hearts of the people." After they had dined Mr. Randle accompanied him "to a place about fifteen miles further towards Carolina," and all the way they published preaching for the next day.

Not having a private room Pilmoor retired into the woods the next day for devotion. About noon he preached, but feared that "the poor ignorant people" knew but little about even the rudiments of Christianity. He dined at a Mr. Sylvester's, and also preached there in the evening "to a good congregation." The following day he went to Colonel Williams's, where he always met "the most friendly reception." On Sunday he preached in a court-house in North Carolina, and he tells us that several of the people were so affected that they fainted away, and all were as solemn as death." The day ensuing he preached at a chapel, and the next day set off for Indiantown, where he met the Rev. Mr. Abbott, a Baptist minister, who had invited him to visit his people. He had a fine congregation in the evening, "and the Lord was

present." The next day he preached "to a vast multitude of Predestinarians, but resolved not to grieve them, and so dwelt upon experimental religion. The people were serious and thankful for the word." Welcoming the opportunities of another day, he hastened eight miles, and by the Rev. Mr. Abbott's appointment, he preached a funeral sermon on "Be ye therefore Ready" to "a great multitude." Crossing the river at Harford Ferry, he drove over a very intricate road through the woods to a place where he tarried all night and preached in a chapel on Sunday morning. In the afternoon he went to Edenton, North Carolina, "and preached in the court-house to a great many people on 'What Think Ye of Christ?'" On Monday he had several gentlemen breakfast with him who had frequently heard him in New York. It is very apparent that his sermons in that city and Philadelphia had echoed widely over the land, and contributed to his comfort and usefulness in the South. Breakfast and company over, he preached at eleven o'clock in Edenton to a large audience. "The word was sent with power to many hearts and caused them to weep for their sins." He found the church at Edenton "a poor, damp, dirty place, where they have preaching only once in three weeks." Here the tavern-keeper declined compensation for Pilmoor's entertainment. He journeyed forward and lodged at another place, and the next morning reached Bath in time for breakfast. At Bath he "found a pretty little church," but says "the parish, like many others, has no minister; I have passed through four counties, and am now in the fifth, and not one Church minister in them all." This was in North Carolina. Of this province Pilmoor wrote: "It is 200 miles wide, and is settled near 400 miles in length from the sea, and the Church established as in England, yet in all this country there are but eleven ministers." Surely there was need for the Wesleyan itinerant in the South. There can be but little doubt that Methodism preserved the greater part of that beautiful region from a state of semi-barbarism, as it did also the western frontiers.

Crossing a ferry, which consumed about an hour and a

half, Pilmoor hastened to a Mr. Moor's. The next day, December 24, 1772, he drove with difficulty through the woods to New Berne. "This," he declares, "has been the most trying day I have had since I left Norfolk." He attended church in New Berne on Christmas-day, and says that he "heard a sensible, useful sermon. Afterward the Lord greatly refreshed my soul at the sacrament. In the afternoon I sent for a man whom I had been told was a hearer of the Methodists in London and desired him to apply for the court-house, which was readily granted. I sent a person about the town to inform the inhabitants that I should preach at six o'clock in the evening. At the time appointed I went to the court-house and had the genteelest congregation I have seen since I left Philadelphia. Some of them invited me to their houses and behaved with the utmost politeness."

At New Berne he dined with Mr. Edwards, Secretary of the Governor, and "was treated with the highest respect. In the evening most of the genteel people in the town attended the preaching." Pilmoor was entertained at breakfast and dinner by several gentlemen in New Berne with marked courtesy. He spent a week there preaching to large audiences.

He was delighted with the society he met in this town. "In all my travels through the world I have met with none like the people of New Berne," he exclaims. "Instead of going to balls and assemblies, as the people of fashion do, especially at this season of the year, they come driving in their coaches to hear the word of the Lord, and wait upon God in his ordinances; and their behavior to me at the last was such as I cannot pass over in silence without ingratitude. The morning I was to leave town two gentlemen waited on me and delivered me a letter in which several small bills of North Carolina money were inclosed, which the gentlemen sent me as a token of their love and respect. Thus the Lord prepares my way before me and my wants are all supplied. I set off on this journey trusting in Providence alone, and hitherto I have wanted nothing."

Pilmoor left New Berne, January 1, 1773, and went for-

ward about 17 miles to Fox's tavern. There, seeing many people walking about, he spoke to several about their salvation, and proposed to join with them "in singing and prayer, to which they readily assented." He "was greatly blessed in calling on God for them."

Travel was difficult and attended with anxiety and indeed with danger. "As I have no guide," he writes, "and am totally unacquainted with the road, it is rather disagreeable travelling in the woods in the night." The following day night overtook him, and it was long after dark before he could find a place to lodge. At Mr. Collier's, fifteen miles from Wilmington, he found entertainment at last. When he left New Berne excessive rains had removed a bridge so that he adopted the expedient of placing planks across the stream, on which he put the wheels of his chaise, and so took it over and then returned for his horse.

Our traveller reached Wilmington, N. C., Sunday, January 3, 1773. He found there a young man who had been a member of the society in Philadelphia, and he, with a sea-captain who had seen Pilmoor in the North, published preaching for him. That evening he preached to a large congregation. The next evening he proclaimed his message in the court-house. For a few days he tarried at Wilmington, and was entertained at a public house. The landlord declined compensation and urged him to stay longer. Gladly would he have done so, as there were many people in that town, but he felt that he must hasten to Charleston. In the afternoon of the sixth day of the year 1773 he left Wilmington, but found the roads so bad that he "was obliged to stop by the way." He reached Brunswick, N. C., the ensuing day, and the next day he preached in the church to a fine congregation. The succeeding day (Sunday) was "wet and disagreeable;" the congregation at the church was small, yet Pilmoor writes: "God enabled me to preach with power."

There being no vessel ready to sail for South Carolina the itinerant "set off by land." After travelling about twenty miles he reached the house of a Baptist, whose name was Moor, with whom he "had great comfort in religious

conversation." The next day he rode forward through a dreary woods, and saw nothing but trees for many miles. The road was good, "and at length I spied a little cottage," he says, "about half a mile from the road, and was glad to find a few blades of Indian corn for my horse. Having provision for myself with me I made out very well."

The next day's journey was exceedingly disagreeable. Heavy sands, a terrible rain-storm, and night travel made it not only difficult but perilous. The following day, January 15, 1773, was one of peculiar perplexity. In the morning "I set forward for the ferry," he says, "but had not gone far before I broke one of my wheels. This distressed me very much. Seeing a house at a small distance I went to try if I could borrow a wheel, which I readily obtained, and it did pretty well. I then went forward through the woods to the ferry. As it was late they would not put me over, so I was obliged to wait until the next day. I have travelled many thousands of miles in England and Wales, and have now seen much of North America, but this day's journey has been the most distressing of all."

His perils of waters and his wanderings in wilderness solitudes were not over. The next morning, being afraid that the wind would rise, he resolved to cross, as soon as possible, a river, which he fails to designate, but which no doubt was the Great Pedee River. "We were on the water before sunrise," he says, "and the river is but two miles over, yet the wind blew so fresh that it was with the utmost difficulty I escaped. I had to pursue my way through the woods, where there was no kind of road. At length I got to the road, and after travelling many miles came to a little tavern, where I got some refreshments for myself and my horse. I then set forward again and got to Santee Ferry just as the boat was going off. I got over without interruption, but the road from this river to the next, which is about a mile, is the very worst I ever beheld. I durst not ride in the chaise at all, and was afraid the horse would break his legs among the trees that are laid across the mud for a road. But I got safely over and met the other boat ready for me. I went on board and

got over just before the night came on. I waded through the water and mud in many places. I came to the Inn almost covered over with dirt, but I had reason to praise my God that I had been preserved from misfortune when in such imminent danger."

As he rode onward the next day over a very bad road Pilmoor saw that his horse began to fail. In this dilemma friendly aid came quickly to him. "Three gentlemen came up," he writes, "and one of them told me he would lend me his horse to draw me to the public house where I intended to stay. So we put his horse to the chaise and he rode with me to the place, where I met with a family of pious, genteel people, who gladly spent the evening with me in reading, singing, and prayer. Here I found a young man in a deep consumption, to whom I spoke with the greatest plainness of the necessity of preparing for death."

The following day his horse held out, with slow driving, till he reached the ferry. From that point our Wesleyan traveller saw Charleston, and the same night, January 18, 1773, he entered that city. "It was very dark," he says, "and I was an utter stranger in the town. I did not know what way to go, but a negro boy offered to go with me to Mr. Crosse's, a publican, to whom I brought a letter from Maryland. It appeared to be but an indifferent place; however, I was glad of any place where I could get a little rest."

More than five weeks before Pilmoor left Norfolk. The distance travelled probably was less than four hundred miles. He had made a trying and laborious winter journey through a country of forests, rivers, and of wide and sparsely inhabited savannas, on which fell the soft light of a Southern sun. Now that he was safe in Charleston he wrote: "My way from Virginia has been very rugged indeed; the trials I have met with very considerable; my expenses very great; yet the Lord has not suffered me to want, nor yet to be in the least discouraged." Not content with his surroundings at the tavern, Pilmoor sought private lodgings, which he obtained at a Mr. Swinton's. As they were professors, he anticipated joining with them in family worship. But

Swinton told him that as the company in his house was mixed, it might not be agreeable, and that family prayer was very uncommon in Charleston. "What!" exclaimed Pilmoor, "family prayer uncommon among Presbyterians?" "It is too much neglected," was the reply. "You, sir, know what is convenient in your own house," rejoined the itinerant, and retired to his room.

In Charleston he met with the Rev. Oliver Hart, of whose church, a few years before, Mary Thorn, the Methodist heroine of Philadelphia, was a member. He treated Pilmoor with fraternal courtesy and invited him to his pulpit. He was pastor of the "Particular," as distinguished from the "General," Baptists. The two preachers met on one occasion at a friend's dinner-table in Charleston, and Pilmoor described Hart as "not only sensible, but truly evangelical and very devout." The Wesleyan preacher tarried a fortnight in the town and preached thirteen times. His ministry seems to have been very well received in Charleston, notwithstanding the repellent response he met when he proposed evening preaching, namely, that "it would be impracticable on account of the mob." After his arrival he went with two gentlemen to a Mr. Tou, who had charge of the General Baptist Meeting House, which was without a minister, to apply for the use of the pulpit. It was readily granted. There at six in the evening of January, 22, 1773, he preached his first sermon in the Palmetto City. The congregation "was not large, but very serious. Two ministers were present." Mr. Hart thanked him for the sermon.

Five days before going away Pilmoor gladly accepted the hospitality of a Baptist, which was offered him for as long as he should continue in the town. He enjoyed his work in Charleston. "My heart is greatly united with the people of this town," he wrote. Near the close of this visit he exclaimed, "Charleston bids fair for a revival of religion." The last sermon he preached there before leaving for Georgia was on Sunday evening, January, 31, 1773. "The house was so full it was with the utmost difficulty I could get to the pulpit," he writes, "and there were hundreds outside that could not get

in at all. I desired them to open the windows, and I believe most of them heard distinctly."

Leaving his horse to rest until his return, Pilmoor started, February 1, on "a poor, mean," borrowed creature for Savannah. That evening he "reached Rantoul's Bridge," having made about sixteen miles. The next day he came to Ashepoo; the next to Allison's tavern; and about noon of the next "to Purysburg." The boat was gone and Pilmoor was obliged to remain over night. The next morning he "set off very early. As they had no proper boat for horses, we were glad to fasten the canoes together with ropes, and put the horses' forefeet in the one and the hinder feet in the other. There was a great freshet in the river which carried us rapidly down the stream for seven miles. Then we had to turn up a creek and had the stream against us, but the negroes pulled very stoutly, and in about two hours put me safe ashore. After a little refreshment I hastened on and about two o'clock [February 5, 1773] I arrived in Savannah."

He noted various points of interest, which he describes. Savannah, he remarks, stands "on a rising ground, on a pretty good river of the same name, which is navigable up to the town, and carries on a considerable trade. There are about three thousand inhabitants, white and black. The houses are part of brick, the rest of timber, not very large, but exceedingly neat. There are three churches—one for the English Episcopalians, one for the Lutherans, and one for the Independents. As the soil is very sandy and the streets not paved, it is exceedingly inconvenient and disagreeable, especially when the weather is hot." John Wesley wrote from the same town to his mother, March 18, 1736: "The place is pleasant beyond imagination, and by all I can learn exceedingly healthful, even in summer, for those who are not intemperate."

Pilmoor attended a lecture at the Rev. Mr. Zubly's meeting in the evening and handed to him letters he had brought from Charleston. The next day he took up his abode at Mr. Zubly's house. The latter had been prejudiced against Mr. Wesley by the Circular Letter on the Arminian Controversy,

which had reached Georgia. Notwithstanding Pilmoor was strongly recommended to him, Zubly told him he could not admit him to his pulpit until he "satisfied him concerning the doctrine of merit and justification by works." "As I do totally renounce every idea of human merit," says Pilmoor, "I soon gave him full satisfaction, and he offered me his church to preach in on Sunday."

The Circular Letter above referred to was, no doubt, that which the Rev. Walter Shirley, of England, issued in reply to several propositions concerning works in their relation to salvation, which were published by Mr. Wesley in the Minutes of his Conference in 1770. In that deliverance, Wesley uttered such words as the following :

"With regard to *working for life*. In fact every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

"We have received it as a maxim that a man is to do nothing *in order to justification*. Nothing can be more false. Whoever repents should do works meet for repentance. And if this is not to find favor, what is he to do them for?

"Is not this salvation by works?

"Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*.

"As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid. We are rewarded according to our works, yea, because of our works. How does this differ from, *for the sake of works*. And how differs this from *Secundum merita operum*? Which is no more than as our works deserve. Can you split this hair? I doubt. I cannot."

Shirley attacked these and similar declarations in the Minutes of 1770, and sent forth his strictures thereon in what is known as "The Circular Letter." Fletcher came forth in defence of the Minutes, and in this controversy his celebrated "Checks to Antinomianism" had their origin. It seems that Shirley's "Circular Letter" had reached Savannah before Pilmoor arrived there.

Pilmoor enjoyed the sacrament at Mr. Zubly's church on Sabbath morning, and in the afternoon at the Episcopal Church he heard a sermon "on the great duty of prayer," but the doctrine, he declares, was "very imperfect. What a

pity," he adds, "that those who profess to be servants of Jesus should have so little to say for their Master!" In the evening he preached "in Mr. Zubly's meeting." Descending from the pulpit he met a young gentleman who, he says, "has often heard me in Philadelphia, and he introduced me to several others, who invited me to go with them to Mr. Wright's, where I spent the evening in great happiness, and we concluded the day with praise and prayer."

Thus, in the town where thirty-six years before John Wesley landed for the purpose of preaching to the Indians, a man who was preaching in America by the appointment of the same Wesley proclaimed the Gospel. Mr. Wesley began his ministry there March 7, 1736; Pilmoor, Wesley's missionary, began his there February 7, 1773. Wesley but imperfectly understood the way of salvation when he was in Savannah. "Self-denial and mortification were to him the chief means of holiness." * Pilmoor, in the same place, declared, "I do utterly renounce every idea of human merit and all justification by works;" the very doctrine with which Luther stirred Europe, and by which the now more enlightened Wesley, with the co-operation of his followers, was beginning to move the English-speaking world.

The great hymnist of Methodism, Charles Wesley, was likewise in Savannah, and there is reason for the belief that a number of his hymns were written while he was in America. Lady Oglethorpe, while residing in the Governor's residence, upon Jekyl Island, near the coast of Southern Georgia, wrote to her father-in-law that "Charles Wesley dwells with us upon the island and is zealous to save the souls of the Indians, who come hither to fish and hunt. Mr. Wesley has the gift of verse and has written many sweet hymns, which we sing." That noble and solemn hymn,

"Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
 'Twixt two unbounded seas, I stand,"

was written by Charles Wesley on Jekyl Island. He wrote from the island to Lady Oglethorpe, who was temporarily in

* Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, Vol. II., p. 11.

Savannah, the history of the composition of that grand lyric :
 “Last evening I wandered to the north end of the Island, and stood upon the narrow point which your ladyship will recall as there projecting into the ocean. The vastness of the watery waste, as compared with my standing place, called to mind the briefness of human life and the immensity of its consequences, and my surroundings inspired me to write the inclosed hymn,

“‘Lo ! on a narrow neck of land,
 ’Twixt two unbounded seas, I stand,’

which I trust may please your ladyship, weak and feeble as it is when compared with the songs of the sweet Psalmist of Israel.” Thus it appears that the date of the origin of this hymn is 1736. It was not written at Land’s End, in England, as has been believed, but on “the north end of Jekyl Island.” *

Pilmoor’s second sermon in Savannah was delivered February 8, 1773, he having dined that day at a Mr. Wright’s, where, he says, “piety and politeness are happily united.”

He remained only ten days in Savannah, one of which he spent in visiting Whitefield’s Orphan House. His description of it is interesting : “Wednesday, March 10, Mr. Wood, a lawyer, and a young man from Boston accompanied me,” he says, “to the Orphan House, twelve miles from Savannah. The road was through the pine trees, which being perpetually green, make it remarkably pleasant. But the situation of the house is by no means agreeable. It stands on a small creek and is almost surrounded by barren sand that produces nothing but pines. The house itself is well enough. In the evening I preached to the family, Thursday morning we had prayers in the chapel. Afterward I returned to Savannah and preached in the evening. Friday was the time for Mr. Zubly’s Dutch lecture, but the town was in confusion on account of his excellency, Governor Wright, who was expected

* I am indebted for this account of this immortal hymn of Charles Wesley’s to an article in the *Nashville Christian Advocate*, May 3, 1894, by the Rev. C. S. Nutter.

this day, so there was no service. Saturday the Governor came, the guns were fired, the militia mustered, and all the gentlemen in the town attended to congratulate him on his safe arrival, and the whole town was full of festivity. Nevertheless we had a pretty large congregation in the evening."

Sunday was wet and gloomy. He concluded the day, his last in the city, "with my kind friend Mr. Wright," he says, "who has behaved to me with the greatest tenderness and civility." We shall soon see him pursuing his journey to the North.

CHAPTER XXI.

ROBERT WILLIAMS'S FORWARD MOVEMENT IN VIRGINIA IN 1773.

WHEN Pilmoor went South from Norfolk he left Robert Williams at Colonel Veal's, near Portsmouth. Williams soon responded to a call from Petersburg, Dinwiddie County. In that county he met the Rev. Devereux Jarratt, who in his preaching and methods was much like the Methodists. He and the Rev. Archibald McRoberts, of a neighboring parish, were zealous and awakening preachers of the Church of England.

Jarratt was a plain native Virginian. Born January 6, 1732, he was early left fatherless and poor. He attended a country school and divided his vacations between farm work and training game-cocks and race-horses. When nineteen he carried all his possessions, except one shirt, on his person into Albemarle County, where he taught a school for nine pounds seven shillings a year. He then was an uncouth and ignorant young man, but with some knowledge of arithmetic. Afterward he taught in the family of a pious woman, who read Flavel's sermons to him. Though at first they produced no effect upon him, he at length became deeply serious, and after a lengthened endeavor to obtain righteousness he received a joy unspeakable. He contemplated joining the Presbyterian Church, but on further reflection decided to seek Episcopal ordination. He went to England in the autumn of 1762 and was ordained in London in the beginning of the following year. He was chosen rector of Bath parish August 29, 1763. In the parish were Saponey, Hatch's Run, and Butterwood Churches. The parish was in a deplorable condition morally, and he doubted if one family within its extensive limits had even the form of Godliness. His

preaching was positive, bold, direct, searching, saving. "I endeavored," he says, "to enforce in the most alarming colors the guilt of sin, the entire depravity of human nature, the awful danger mankind are in by nature and by practice, the tremendous curse to which they are obnoxious, and their utter inability to evade the stroke of divine justice by their own power, merit, or good works."

When he began this startling preaching but seven or eight persons in any one of his churches received the Holy Communion. Ten years later he had nine hundred, if not a thousand, communicants in his three churches.* To many, such preaching was not pleasing, and there was an outcry against it, but the preacher continued to proclaim his message. The common people in increasing numbers went to hear him, but for a year he saw no abiding effect of his ministry, except that some were less profane, and he believed that at times some of his hearers were alarmed. Jarratt says: "In 1765 the power of God was more sensibly felt by a few. These were constrained to apply to me to inquire what they must do to be saved. And now I began to preach abroad as well as in private houses, and to meet little companies in the evenings and converse on divine things. I believe some this year were converted to God, and thenceforth the work of God slowly went on. In the years 1770 and 1771 we had a more continuous outpouring of the Spirit at a place in my parish called White Oak. It was here I first formed the people into a society that they might assist and strengthen each other. The good effects of this were soon apparent. Convictions were deep and lasting, and not only knowledge, but faith and love and holiness, continually increased. In the year 1772 the revival was more considerable, and extended in some places for fifty or sixty miles around. It increased still more the following year. In the spring of 1774 it was more remarkable than ever. The word preached was attended with such energy that some were pierced to the heart. Tears fell plentifully from the eyes of the hearers, and some were constrained to cry out. A goodly number were gathered in this year, both

* Bennett's Memorials of Methodism in Virginia, p. 62. Richmond, 1871.

in my parish and in many of the neighboring counties. I formed several societies out of those who were convinced or converted, and found it a happy means of building up those that had believed and preventing the rest from losing their convictions." *

Jarratt did not confine his labors within his parish, but went abroad, and soon had a circuit five or six hundred miles in extent. He attended upon his own parish on the Sabbath and itinerated all the week. He averaged five sermons a week and suffered criticism from his clerical brethren.

Robert Williams was the first Wesleyan preacher that entered Jarratt's parish. He went to Petersburg in February, 1773, and his way was in part prepared for him there by a man who was converted through the ministry of the Rev. Archibald McRoberts. Watters, who was then at Norfolk, says Williams preached in "Petersburg and the adjacent country for several months with great success, and he was the first Methodist preacher that had ever been in those parts. Mr. Jarratt and Mr. McRoberts both received him with open arms and bade him a hearty welcome to their parishes." † Watters travelled Brunswick Circuit, "in the lower parts of Virginia," a portion of the year 1777, and heard McRoberts "preach Christ and him crucified to a listening multitude," and remarks: "He was the first minister of the Church of England that ever I heard preach Christian experience." In 1769 Gressett Davis "was convinced of sin" by the preaching of McRoberts.‡ In a letter to Mr. Wesley dated July 11, 1780, Davis says: "My eyes were opened to see the spirituality of the law. The word conversion was as new to me as if there had been no such term in the English language. As to Christians I knew of not one within twenty miles. In short, I did not know that it was the privilege of

* Jarratt's letter to Rankin, in *Narrative of the Revival in Virginia*, pp. 4, 5, 6. London, 1778.

† *Life of Watters*, p. 34.

‡ The Rev. Archibald McRoberts was a successful evangelist. Jarratt says: "A remarkable power attended his preaching and many were truly converted to God, not only in his parish, but in other parts where he was called to labor. We joined hand in hand in the great work." Later McRoberts became a Presbyterian.

any except ministers of the Gospel to feel what I now experienced."

In 1772 Gressett Davis became acquainted with a young man from Yorkshire, England, who had been a Wesleyan from his youth, and whose name was Nathaniel Young. "This young man," writes Davis to Wesley, "who I fear had lost the vital part of religion, an old Quaker, and myself hired the theatre in Petersburg, and bound ourselves to invite any and every sect and party who we thought preached the truth of the Gospel as far as conversion, to come and preach in the said house under this restriction, namely, that they should not intermeddle with the principles of Church government. We soon got many travelling preachers, more than at our set out we thought were in America—of Churchmen, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Quakers—to come and preach, though nothing yet appeared from the devil's agents but persecution.

"In a few months after the house was opened good Robert Williams made a visit to Norfolk. Young and myself, both having connections in the mercantile line at Norfolk, invited the good old man up to this place. His entrance among us was in February, 1773. I informed this faithful servant of Christ that our faith was plighted to each other not to admit any who would not promise not to intermeddle with opinions. The old man replied we only wanted a change of heart and to preach up holiness of life. This we readily agreed to. He labored among us about the town and no fruit appeared for several weeks. We then furnished him a horse and he travelled into the country. In a short time a surprising work broke out in the country, which has since spread over every part of Virginia and North Carolina." *

In March, 1773, Williams first visited Jarratt, and remained in the region several weeks. He was in Norfolk again, as we learn from Pilmoor, April 13, 1773, and also on the twenty-seventh and the twenty-ninth of the same month, laboring in the Gospel. He soon went forth into the country again and returned to Dinwiddie County, for Jarratt, in a letter to Wesley, dated June 29, 1773, said Williams "has just

* Bennett's Memorials of Methodism in Virginia.

now returned to my house from a long excursion in the back counties." Jarratt assures Wesley that "many people here heartily join with me in returning our most grateful acknowledgments for the concern you have shown for us in sending so many preachers to the American colonies. Two have preached for some time in Virginia—Mr. Pilmoor and Mr. Williams. I have never had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Pilmoor, but by all I can learn he is a gracious soul and a good preacher."

Jarratt knew very little of Methodism until he met Williams. He had heard both Wesley and Whitefield in London, but was not specially impressed thereby, though he says they both spoke well and to the purpose. "The first Methodist preacher I ever saw or conversed with in Virginia," says Jarratt, "was Mr. Robert Williams, a plain, simple-hearted, pious man. This I believe was his general character. He came to my house in the year 1773. He stayed with me near a week and preached several sermons in my parish, most or all of which I heard. I liked his preaching very well, and especially the animated manner in which his discourses were delivered. I had much conversation with him concerning Mr. Wesley and the nature and design of Methodism. He informed me that the Methodists were true members of the Church of England—that their design was to build up and not divide the Church—that the preachers did not assume the office of priests, administered neither the ordinance of baptism nor the Lord's Supper, but looked to the parish ministers in all places for these—that they travelled to call sinners to repentance—to join proper subjects in society for mutual edification, and to do all they could for the spiritual edification of these societies." *

Williams was many years in advance of the Methodist Book Concern in publishing and scattering Wesleyan literature. Jarratt says: "Mr. Williams also furnished me with some of their books, and I became acquainted with the Minutes of several of their Conferences. By these I was let into the general plan, and that '*he that left the Church left the*

* Life of Jarratt.

*Methodists.** I put a strong mark on these words. I felt much attachment to Mr. Williams and to other preachers who came after him. I received them into my house with great cordiality and treated them with disinterested benevolence. I hoped good would be done by their means, not only in promoting the unity of the Church, but also in calling sinners to repentance and establishing believers. As I had been accustomed before this to collect and meet the people for religious improvement, I could have no objection to religious societies or any prudential means that seemed to promise the edification of mankind. I therefore concurred in and encouraged Christian societies, and exhorted such as had been my hearers in different parts of Carolina and Virginia, to join in society and admit the assistance of the Methodist preachers as helpers of their joy and establishment in religion. In some places where I had travelled and preached, a number of the people had objections against joining what was called a Methodist society; they wished rather to continue in a society which took its denomination from me; for I had drawn up some rules for societies and had begun to put them in practice in other places besides our own parish. But the principal reason against joining a Methodist society was the fear of being led thereby from the Church of England, which was very abhorrent from their sentiments. I, believing that the Methodists were really sincere in their profession of attachment to the Church, took much pains to remove that objection. For this purpose I rode many a mile and endeavored to quiet the minds of the people by showing them that the Methodists were members of the Church, and could not be otherwise, because all that left the Church left the Methodists. My endeavors in this respect were successful, and many societies were soon established, and preachers were appointed to take charge of them according to the rules of Methodism. I believe good was done and the work spread and prospered. I have been the more circumstantial in this account, because I have been censured by some for giving

* This expression is in the English Wesleyan Minutes, which were the "Minutes" Jarratt read.

the countenance I did to the Methodists and lay-preachers, persons, as many supposed, inimical to America.* From what I have said it must be apparent that my views were disinterested, and that what I did was done to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls.” †

It is apparent from Jarratt’s testimony that Williams, by his preaching, his conversations, and his books, was not an unskilful instrument in bringing into active co-operation with Methodism this prominent and powerful minister of the Church of England, whose services to the Wesleyan movement in the South were so great, so continuous, and so valuable. Asbury labored in union with Jarratt, was often a guest in his house, and greatly appreciated his work. Rankin also mentions him with manifest affection, and informs us that about January, 1776, Jarratt requested that his parish might be included in Brunswick Circuit, “that all who chose it might have the privilege of meeting in class and being members of the society.” He soon saw the salutary effects. Many that had but small desires before began to be much alarmed and labored earnestly after eternal life. In a little time many were deeply awakened and many tasted of the pardoning love of God. In a few months Mr. Jarratt saw more fruit of his labors than he had seen for many years, and he went on with the preachers hand in hand, both in doctrine and discipline.‡

Jarratt’s fellowship with the Methodist preachers in affection and toil is illustrated by Rankin, who July 2, 1776, says: “I rode with Mr. Shadford to Mr. Jarratt’s, who with Mrs. Jarratt received us with open arms. I preached the next day, not far from his house, to a deeply attentive congregation. Many were much affected at the preaching, but far more at the meeting of the society. Mr. Jarratt himself was con-

* Almost all the Methodist preachers in America in that day were Englishmen, and, like Wesley, loyal to Great Britain. The controversy which brought on the war of independence was then rife, and for the reasons mentioned those preachers were often regarded with suspicion by those who favored the American cause.

† The Life of the Rev. Devereux Jarratt, rector of Bath Parish, Dinwiddie County, Virginia. Written by himself. In a series of letters to the Rev. John Coleman. Pp. 107, 108, 109, 110, 111. Baltimore, 1806.

‡ Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Virginia, p. 28. London, 1778.

strained to praise God aloud for His great Love to him and to his people.”* We have a similar example of Jarratt’s friendship for and co-operation with the Methodists from William Watters, who in 1777 travelled Brunswick Circuit, within which Jarratt lived. On one occasion, “weak and hardly ably to sit on my horse,” says Watters, “I at last came to the house of Mr. Jarratt, with whom I stayed a night, as I did every time I came round my circuit. His barn, well fitted up with seats and a pulpit, was one of our preaching places; and I found him very friendly and attentive to me while I stayed in the parts.”†

A further illustration of the spirit of Jarratt and of the completeness of his identification with the Methodists in feeling and work is seen in a letter he wrote to Rankin, May 11, 1776, a part of which was published in the “Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Virginia.” Jarratt says: “I believe three score in and near my parish have believed through grace since the Quarterly Meeting. Such a work I never saw. Sometimes twelve, sometimes fifteen, find the Lord at one class meeting. I am just returned from meeting two classes. Much of the power of God was in each. My dear partner is now happy in God her Saviour. I clap my hands exulting and praise God. Blessed be the Lord that ever he sent you and your brethren into this part of his vineyard.”

When Jarratt died Asbury commemorated his apostolic character and ministry in a funeral sermon. He thought of publishing the discourse, as an extant autograph letter of his shows; but whether Asbury did or did not print the sermon, he left an outline of it in his Journal. He bore high testimony to Jarratt’s talents, zeal, and abounding labor and usefulness, and says: “There were very few parish churches within fifty miles of his own in which he had not preached, to which labors of love and zeal were added preaching on solitary plantations and meeting-houses. He was the first who received our despised preachers. When strangers and unfriended he took them to his house and had societies

* Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Virginia, p. 31.

† Life of William Watters, p. 58.

formed in his parish. Some of his people became travelling preachers among us. He was a man of genius, possessed a great deal of natural oratory, was an excellent reader and a good writer. I am convinced that there have been more souls convinced by his ministry than by that of any other man in Virginia." *

Jarratt's hold upon the confidence and love of the Methodist preachers was conspicuously shown at the Conference held in 1782 at Ellis's Meeting House in Virginia, which acknowledged "their obligations to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt for his kind and friendly services to the preachers and people from our first entrance into Virginia, and more particularly for attending our Conference in Sussex in public and in private; and advise the preachers in the South to consult him and to take his advice in the absence of Mr. Asbury." † Jesse Lee in his youth attended Jarratt's ministry. In his "History of the Methodists" he says: "Mr. Jarratt was one of the most pious clergymen that I was acquainted with, and his attachment to the Methodists was very great, and never abated until the Methodists broke off from the Church of England in 1784."

Nathaniel Lee, the father of this celebrated Methodist preacher and historian of Methodism, lived about sixteen miles from Petersburg, where "he owned several hundred acres of land and enough servants to cultivate them." He and his family were nominally Episcopalians. Sapony Church, the principal sanctuary in Jarratt's parish, was about twelve miles from Mr. Lee's residence. Hearing Jarratt occasionally he became converted. Subsequently his wife and their son Jesse experienced the same spiritual renewal. Mr. Lee and his family, in hearing Robert Williams at every convenient opportunity for about a year, became Methodists. Williams began to form societies in their neighborhood in the spring of 1774, and in the summer following Nathaniel Lee and his wife and two of their sons, Peter and Jesse, joined the Methodist society. From that time the elder Lee's house was a Metho-

* Asbury's Journal, Vol. III., pp. 21-17; Vol. I., p. 435.

† Minutes of the Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

dist preacher's home, and a preaching place until his death, in 1820. His son Jesse became one of the most commanding preachers and leaders of the new denomination and a chief instrument of its progress in the South and in the North.

About the end of the summer of 1773, Williams returned to Norfolk and shortly afterward he and Watters sailed thence to Baltimore, where they spent the Sabbath, "preaching both in the town and at 'the Point' to considerable congregations." Watters reached his home in Maryland apparently in September, as he says he had been absent eleven months, and he began his journey to Virginia in October, 1772. Williams did not tarry long in Maryland, for on the eighth of October, 1773, he was in Philadelphia, and for a short time was active in the ministry there and in New Jersey. A great work for Methodism was accomplished by him while he was in Virginia, in the early months of 1773, by so enlightening the mind of Mr. Jarratt respecting it, as to bring him into active and enthusiastic support of the new evangelical movement.

CHAPTER XXII.

METHODISM IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES DOWN TO THE FIRST CONFERENCE.

ASBURY and Wright were laboring in the region of the Hudson and the Delaware, while Boardman was in New England, and Pilmoor in Maryland, in the summer of 1772. Captain Webb must have sailed for England about the time that Boardman moved eastward and Pilmoor southward, for he appeared at the British Conference, which met at Leeds August 4th, and made an appeal to it for more preachers. Shadford says when the Captain "warmly exhorted preachers to go to America, I felt my spirit stirred within me to go." King and Williams both were in Maryland in the summer of the same year, and King continued there in the fall and winter.

Asbury's itinerancies led him to New York City about the first of August, 1772. For about four months he had been preaching in and about Philadelphia. Aside from his labors in that city his work was chiefly in New Jersey. He also was somewhat in Delaware. He visited Wilmington, New Castle, and also went to Bohemia Manor in eastern Maryland. He preached several times at Greenwich, Burlington, New Mills, now Pemberton, Trenton, and elsewhere in New Jersey. He now entered upon his work in New York, and preached there on the seventh of August, and several times very soon thereafter on Sundays and week-days. On one of these occasions he complains of finding "broken classes and a disordered society, so that my heart was sunk within me." This was after Wright had conducted the work there for about three months, in the absence of both Boardman and Pilmoor. Asbury met the leaders on the ninth of October

and says "there were some sharp debates. Mr. L[upton?] told me I had already preached the people away, and intimated that the whole work would be destroyed by me." The next day he received a letter from Mr. Wesley, requiring "a strict attention to discipline," and placing him in charge of the American field as his assistant. Wesley at this time also enjoined that Mr. Williams "should not print any more books without his consent." Asbury also received a letter from Williams, informing him of the condition of the work in Maryland, and that it was appointed for Asbury "to winter there." Williams was then about to start with Watters to reinforce Pilmoor in Virginia. While in New York at this time Asbury visited and preached at New Rochelle, Kingsbridge, Newtown, and Staten Island.

On the nineteenth of October, 1772, Asbury started for Maryland. He now saw Princeton for the first time and met Boardman there. They "agreed in judgment about the affairs of the society, and were comforted together." As he advanced he preached twice each at Trenton and Burlington, in New Jersey. He also was in Chester, Pa., where he saw the hardened prisoners in the jail, and at Bohemia, where he met Solomon Hersey, "a man hearty in the cause." Early in November he crossed the Susquehanna, and was soon at Deer Creek, which at that time and for long afterward was a place of much interest and influence in Maryland Methodism. What he found there he thus describes: "The Lord hath done great things for these people, notwithstanding the weakness of the instruments and some little irregularities. Men who neither feared God nor regarded man—swearers, liars, cock-fighters, card-players, horse-racers, drunkards, etc., are now so changed as to become new men, and are filled with the praises of God."

Asbury moved over about the same territory in Maryland that Pilmoor had already traversed, and also went into Kent County, which the movement had reached. There he encountered opposition from a Church clergyman, who forbade him to preach; told him the people did wrong in hearing him, and charged him with making schism. At the house of

Joseph Presbury, in Gunpowder Neck, Asbury attended a quarterly meeting on the twenty-third of December. He here shows that Mr. Boardman had previously held a similar meeting in Maryland ; for he says that then Boardman "gave them their way," so that now he (Asbury) was "obliged to connive at some things." There being as yet no annual Conference, the business which was done in it subsequently was now transacted at the Quarterly Conference. There is no trace as yet of such a conference having been held east of the Susquehanna. At the Quarterly Conference, at which Asbury now presided, the preachers were stationed, and the appointments proved puzzling to Dr. Bangs, who in his "History" gives them, with his own interrogatories concerning them, thus : "Brother S., by whome we suppose he means Strawbridge, and brother O. (who?) in Frederick County. Brother K. (King?) and brother W(illiams) and I. R. (who?) on the other side of the Bay." As Williams at that time was in Virginia, and continued there until the next summer, Bangs failed in his guess regarding him. Possibly the brother W. was Wright. Lednum, however, gives the names of the preachers whose initials only are given by Asbury, thus : Strawbridge, Owen, King, Webster, Rollins. The three latter were converts in Maryland and had but just entered upon the work of the ministry in a local way. It was found at this Conference that the collections "were sufficient to pay the expenses." Asbury says "Brother S[trawbridge] received £8 quarterage ; brother K[ing] and myself £6 each." The question of the sacraments was considered. "J. K.," says Asbury, "was neuter, brother S. pleaded much for the ordinances, and so did the people, who appeared to be much biassed by him. I told them I would not agree to it at that time and insisted on abiding by our rules. Great love subsisted among us at this meeting and we parted in peace."

Asbury went to Baltimore January 3, 1773, and this is the first that he mentions having preached in that town. At "the Point" he "had a large congregation at the house of Captain Patten," in which were "many of the principal people." At night he preached in "a house well filled with

people" in the city. He was quickly away to the rural parts again, to which most of his toil was given. Now and then, however, he was back in Baltimore. The progress of the work at this time in the country in Maryland is indicated in a letter Asbury received from Richard Owen early in March, 1773, in which Owen said: "I know not what it will come to. Almost every person seems to be under religious concern. There are about 22 already joined in society at Seneca. At Georgetown four have lately been enabled to rejoice in God and one at Rocky Creek."

Abraham Whitworth, a young man from England, preached in southern New Jersey in the summer and autumn of 1772. His usefulness there was great and far-reaching in its results because his ministry brought Benjamin Abbott to Christ and into the service of the new movement. Before he heard Whitworth, Abbott was a rough, drinking, swearing, fighting, gambling companion of evil-doers. Frequently was he arraigned at the bar of justice for his deeds of violence. "If any affront or insult were offered him he seldom failed to deal out blows to the aggressor." Freeborn Garrettson, in a manuscript yet preserved, relates a tradition that Abbott once knocked down a judge who was to try him, saying: "I might as well be convicted for an old sheep as a lamb." The first time Abbott heard Whitworth he was not impressed, though "the preacher was much engaged and the people were crying all through the house." In his application, however, the preacher moved Abbott in a degree. The fact that this was eleven or twelve miles from Abbott's home renders it probable that it was at the church where Evans had preached at Greenwich. The next time Abbott heard him was in his own neighborhood, where Methodist preaching was then "a new thing." "He preached with power," says Abbott. "The word reached my heart in such a powerful manner that it shook every joint in my body. Tears flowed in abundance, and I cried aloud for mercy."

His compunction was severe, so that he "felt a hell" in his breast, and started one night to commit suicide, but was arrested by what seemed to him "a voice saying, 'This tor-

ment is nothing to hell.'” He thought the devil was about to take him literally away. He heard the preacher again on Sunday, the eleventh of October, at the place where he first heard him, and at the dawn of the next day his anguish vanished, and the lion became a lamb. “My heart felt as light as a bird,” he says. Immediately he went forth to tell his new experience to his neighbors. At Elwell’s Mill, two miles from his home, he says: “While I was telling them my experience and exhorting them to flee from the wrath to come, some laughed, others cried, and some thought I had gone distracted. Before night a report was spread all through the neighborhood that I was raving mad.”

At this time Abbott lived in Pittsgrove Township, Salem County, New Jersey, and was employed by Benjamin Van Meter, a farmer, solely on account of his physical strength, “for otherwise he was very objectionable, being intemperate, and when so very quarrelsome.”* As a result of his conversion a class was formed at the house of his neighbor, John Murphy, of which Abbott was one of the first members and Mr. Murphy the leader. From this class came the Friendship Church, of which my godly father and mother were members, and in whose graveyard they sleep with several of their children and among some of the early Methodists of southern New Jersey. Friendship Church in Salem County was the first society formed south of Greenwich Church, and its origin was no doubt due to the labors of Whitworth, which resulted in the conversion of Benjamin Abbott.

This rough, hard man was tamed, subdued, saved, and became a flame of fire in South Jersey, when there were fewer than a score of Methodist preachers in America. Probably no man of his day in this country made a more profound and enduring impression as an awakening evangelist. His speech, if rude, was electrical. With a vivid imagination which, unchastened, seemed at times almost grotesque, and much influenced by his impressions, Abbott yet was a man of singular and marvellous power. By his conversion the forces of

* The Rev. Jefferson Lewis’s Account of Methodism in Salem, N. J., in *New York Christian Advocate*, 1839.

his nature were turned in a reverse channel, and ever afterward flowed in a divine direction. He was a great lover of souls, tremendously in earnest, depended absolutely upon the Holy Spirit, and he achieved moral wonders among the people. He ploughed and seeded to Methodism much of southern New Jersey, supporting himself meanwhile by the labor of his hands.

Abbott was the first convert in New Jersey who became a preacher. Jesse Lee knew him, and says that as a speaker Abbott was "a great blunderer and his language incorrect, more so than was common," and yet Lee says, as is said in the Minutes, that Abbott "was one of the wonders of America." His acquired mental equipment was small, but by the use of all his resources he became one of the most successful and celebrated Methodist evangelists in America, in the primitive times. And but few names in American Methodism in the past shine brighter and are known farther than that of Benjamin Abbott, who until the fortieth year of his life was remarkable for wickedness.

Although Abbott travelled much and far as a preacher before 1789, he did not until that year formally enter upon the itinerancy. In this sphere his travels were extensive and his labors abundant. In New York, New Jersey, and Maryland he was a burning and a shining light as an itinerant preacher. His strength in a few years failed, and he went home to New Jersey to die. His death occurred in Salem in that State on the fourteenth of August, 1796. The last words he uttered intelligently were: "Glory to God, I see heaven sweetly opened before me." At the age of 64 Benjamin Abbott ceased his unique and wonderfully successful career as a winner of souls, and he rests in the old Methodist graveyard in Salem, among those who were seals to his ministry.

Abbott began preaching in 1774. Gatch entered New Jersey the middle of November, 1773, with John King. He preached there until the spring of 1774. While there he called on Abbott to close a meeting with prayer, which, Abbott says, was the first prayer he ever offered in public. Shortly after this he began his mighty ministry.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PILMOOR'S RETURN FROM THE SOUTH TO THE NORTH.

IN the middle of February, 1773, Mr. Pilmoor left Savannah for the North. The Rev. Mr. Zubly accompanied him as far as Purysburg, a village at which Mr. Wesley had been, of which he says: "Mr. Belinger sent a negro lad with me to Purysburg, or rather to the poor remains of it. O how hath God stretched over this place the lines of confusion and the stones of emptiness!" Pilmoor preached the next day at Purysburg to a good congregation. "The people were much affected under the sermon," he says. "After preaching I was invited to dine with a Frenchman, who was one of the principal inhabitants, and expressed a very great desire that I would stay and be their parish minister; but parishes, however valuable as to earthly things, have no weight with me. My call is to run—to run to and fro."

Pilmoor reached Charleston on the seventeenth of February, 1773. Two days afterward he sent word through the town that he would preach, and in the evening a fine congregation heard him. The next day he received a visit from a Christian young man who was a Methodist in England. He also received a message from the Rev. Mr. Percy, one of Lady Huntingdon's preachers, who had just arrived from England, and was very zealous. No doubt this was the Mr. Percy whom Mary Thorn says Mr. Hart directed to persuade her to leave the Methodists. While Pilmoor tarried in Charleston he preached more than once in the Rev. Oliver Hart's church.

Pilmoor's ministry was very effective in Charleston. On the third of March many persons spoke with him "who were blessed under the preaching." The first Sunday in March he

preached three times in Charleston, and in the evening of the following day he delivered his farewell discourse from the text, "Finally, brethren, farewell," etc., to "a vast multitude of people." He remarks: "My heart was greatly engaged for the happiness of these dear people, who have always behaved to me as if I had been an angel of God. I should like well to continue longer in this town, but I must hasten through the woods to Philadelphia and preach the gospel in the waste places of the wilderness." Leaving Charleston, finally, on the ninth of March, 1773, he was accompanied to the boat by many friends, and after a good passage was kindly received at a Mrs. Baskerdale's.

Having an appointment to preach at a Presbyterian meeting-house he, with a son of his hostess, went thither the next day. It was Militia Day, and many gentlemen were assembled near the house of worship. The captain offered to wait until the sermon was preached, "and came with his whole company to hear the word of God." After preaching, Pilmoor dined with a "Mr. Westkit, a member of the Independent Church in Charleston, and was as happy as if they had been acquainted for years." In this connection he recorded his opinion of the American people thus: "The religious people in America unite piety and civility so happily together that they are by far the most agreeable people I know of on earth."

The following day, March 11, 1773, his good host went with Pilmoor to "Wappaton meeting-house, where a great number of genteel people assembled to hear the word." After retiring to the woods for secret prayer Pilmoor preached to them. The ensuing day, at a place called Winnian, he met a congregation "who received the word with gladness." As he surveyed the field he was moved to exclaim: "In these parts the fields are white already, and there might be a plentiful harvest of souls if they had but a faithful pastor." It was not until about twelve years after this that Bishop Asbury, in connection with Henry Willis and Jesse Lee, went to Charleston and started Methodism in that town. It does not appear that Pilmoor organized any societies in

South Carolina or Georgia. At Georgetown "the school-master sent word through the town that there would be preaching in the court-house. A good many people assembled 'to hear Pilmoor,' who were greatly affected."

He had a dangerous passage amidst high winds across the Black River. He reached the shore safely and drove about five miles, where, from an unwilling host, he secured a night's entertainment. "The man of the house," he writes, "was very unwilling to take me in, but at length he consented. He told me many things that he had met with among strangers, and was very rough and unpleasant. I told him he was at liberty to think what he pleased concerning me, as I was a stranger, but assured him I should fully satisfy him for his trouble before I left his house. After some time he said, 'I believe you are a man of God,' and from that time he was remarkably civil and kind; so we spent the evening in religious conversation."

When he came to "the Bay," which he fails to name, but which no doubt was Winyaw Bay, he encountered "perils of waters." He ventured into the bay, but presently "was at a full stop. The horse would not move. The spring tide swelled very rapidly, the waves rolled against the sides of the horse, and over his back. In this situation," says Pilmoor, "I did not know what I must do. The sea was flowing in so violently that I must in a very short time have been swallowed up by the waves. In my distress I lifted up my heart unto God and cried to him for deliverance, and immediately it was impressed on my mind as distinctly as if I had heard a voice saying unto me, 'Jump down into the water; go along by the side of the horse; take hold of the reins, wade through the water and pull the horse after you.' The impression was so powerful that I plunged into the sea immediately, and soon found that the horse had got into a quicksand, as the water did not reach up to my breast. I kept close to the shaft, got on to his head, took hold of the reins, and pulling him forward he plunged with all his might to get out of the sand, and I drew him along and escaped safe to the shore. This was one of the most remarkable deliverances of my life.

In all my travels in Europe and America I never was in such distress before. Yet the Lord redeemed my life from destruction and saved me in the trying hour." He soon found a welcome retreat in the home of a friendly stranger. "After I had travelled about a mile through the wood," he says, "I found a little cottage belonging to a French refugee, who had left all for the sake of his conscience, where I was glad to take up my abode for that night. I was thoroughly wet from head to foot and had nothing dry to put on, for all my linen, clothes, and books in the chaise had been under water a considerable time. The honest Frenchman was remarkably kind. He lent me a shirt, and his own clothes, to put on till mine could be dried. They made up a huge fire and hung all my clothes and linen around, and sat up most of the night to get them properly dried. Then next day when I had gotten my things a little in order I took leave of my kind friends and set forward."

He now came to the Boundary House, which stood exactly upon the line which divided the two Carolinas. Here he put up for the night and found the accommodations remarkably good. "The next morning," says Pilmoor, "Mr. Merriion would not take anything of me, but sent a negro with two horses fifteen miles to help me along my journey toward Mr. Moors's. Here I met with a kind reception indeed. Mr. Moors is a lover of all good men and rejoices in the prosperity of Zion. The day following I found he had sent word to all his neighbors that he had a minister at his house and there would be a sermon about twelve o'clock. At the time appointed a fine company assembled, to whom I preached Christ Jesus."

The next day, March 23, 1773, he hastened to Brunswick. As soon as he arrived there he sent a person round the town to publish preaching at five o'clock, at which time he had a good congregation, "who all behaved as if they felt that God was there." The following day there was a large congregation in the church, to whom Pilmoor preached with "light and liberty." Early in the afternoon he started for Wilmington, North Carolina, and soon encountered winds and waves.

“The wind rose high and blew right up the river, so it was impracticable to get over,” he says. “This was the more distressing, as there was no house, and I was likely to be detained on the island all night. Presently the dreadful lightnings flashed all around me in a most terrible manner, the rolling thunder burst over my head, the wind blew tempestuously and brought a very high tide which flowed all around me. As I had no other shelter I put up the head of the chaise and expected I must stay there all night. I was very uneasy on account of the tide, as I did not know how high it might rise. When the wind and the thunder abated I started for the boat, which presently arrived and took me over to the town. I went directly to Mr. Walker’s, where I met Mr. Sutherland, a gentleman who has frequently heard me preach in Philadelphia and seemed exceedingly glad to meet with me. This day has been trying indeed. I have been in perils by land and perils by water—the heavens bursting with thunders over my head and forked lightnings flying all around me, while I was detained on a desolate island. Yet the Lord has kept me. He has been my hiding place from the wind and my covert from the tempest.”

The next evening he preached in the court-house in Wilmington to a large assembly, and the succeeding forenoon he delivered another sermon and then rode fifteen miles. On Sunday, March 28th, he preached at Beesley’s Chapel to many people. While preaching several persons went to a pail that stood near the door to get water to drink, for which conduct he openly reproved them. On Monday he travelled above forty miles through the woods and came in the evening to White Oak, where he “rested among the followers of Christ.” The next day he proceeded slowly to New Berne and preached there in the evening, and also twice the succeeding day. “People of fashion in this town,” he remarks, “think it a privilege to hear the gospel.”

In going over the Albemarle Sound, on the third of April, “the wind was contrary, but as there was room enough to tack about I thought we might do very well. Two gentlemen came after us in a canoe intreating us to go back and

preach in their parish churches on the Sunday, but my heart was set upon Edenton and therefore could not comply. We strove to get over, but the negroes, who had no mind to go forward, soon ran us aground, where we stayed till near sunset, but could not get off. I resolved to take a few things which I should want and venture over in the canoe, and about nine o'clock got to shore. Having been nearly seven hours on the water, I was exceedingly fatigued. My expenses for horses, ferriages, etc., this day amounted to one pound fifteen and two pence."

On Sunday, April 4, 1773, he went to church at Edenton and heard a sermon on the Sufferings of Christ, which was delivered in "a cold, lifeless manner," and without much impression upon the people. In the afternoon Pilmoor preached with power in the court-house to a large congregation, and again in the evening. "I found a longing desire for the salvation of the people," he says, "whom I entreated to give themselves to the Lord. When I returned to the Inn several persons followed me, with whom I spent an hour most agreeably in conversing of the things of God and the heavenly world."

The next day he travelled about forty miles, and the day succeeding, namely, April 6, 1773, he reached Norfolk. The people hailed his return with rejoicing.

On Thursday, the 8th of April, he went to Portsmouth, "and preached to a great multitude of people on Our Saviour's Agony in the Garden, and the next day, being Good Friday, on the Sufferings of Christ on Mt. Calvary." In the afternoon he "preached Christ Crucified in Norfolk" to a large and deeply serious congregation. The following day he met the society in Portsmouth, "and joined two new members and readmitted a penitent backslider."

He preached in Norfolk on Sunday afternoon, April 11th, 1773, and noted the contrast between his reception now and that which he received when he first went there. Then "I was but little regarded," he says; "now they treat me as if I were an angel of God."

Robert Williams, who the preceding month was at the

Rev. Devereux Jarratt's and in the region contiguous, was now at Norfolk. During the four weeks in the spring of 1773 that Pilmoor remained in and about that town he and Williams were together on several occasions. On the thirteenth of April Pilmoor remarks that he "went over the water to hear Mr. Williams." The ensuing day he was taken into the country to a place he does not name, but at which he says "I found a fine congregation and preached with particular unction. Afterwards I met the society I had formed before I went to the South, took in a new member and was greatly comforted in speaking with them about experimental religion." Thus it appears that in the period of about five months that he labored in Virginia before leaving for Savannah he not only formed a society in Norfolk and one in Portsmouth, but also another in a contiguous rural place, which on his return from his lengthened Southern tour he found was still in existence.

Pilmoor introduced the watch meeting in Norfolk on the 27th of April, 1773. Of this occasion he says: "At eight in the evening our first watch night in Virginia began. Many people came flocking to see what we should do, which gave me a fine opportunity of showing them the necessity of watching and prayer. Mr. Williams assisted me." Pilmoor also says that two days later, namely, April 29, 1773, Williams preached in Norfolk.

The time of Pilmoor's final departure from the South is now at hand. In the four weeks spent at this time in Norfolk and the vicinity he was busily employed. He visited from house to house, conversed with inquirers, preached the Gospel and added members to the societies. He also felt the presence of bodily infirmity. "My constitution," he writes, "has suffered exceedingly since my arrival in America, but I do not repent. If I die here it is quite as well as if I died in England, provided I die in the Lord; and I have not a shadow of doubt."

On Sunday, May 2, 1773, he gave two valedictory discourses. The morning sermon appears to have been preached at Portsmouth. "At ten o'clock," he says, "I had

a prodigious multitude to hear my farewell sermon on the Apostolical benediction—‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.’ The people were exceedingly affected and we parted in hope of meeting in glory. At night the congregation at Norfolk was large and remarkably serious while I delivered my last sermon to them. I felt as if I could spend my very life in striving for their happiness and salvation. Many of them wept much at the thought of parting, especially as it is probable they will see my face no more.” He went to Colonel Veal’s and thence to Mr. Hughes’s. A large number of his friends had crossed the water and desired to hear him again. He preached in the open air and then returned to the house and prayed with them once more. He then met a society and closed the day “very weary, but very happy.” His last leave-taking with his Virginia friends occurred on the third of May, 1773. The affecting occasion he shall describe: “I had a great number of persons take leave of me at Mr. Taylor’s, where we joined in solemn prayer. I left them with an heart overwhelmed with sorrow. I was obliged to be resolute and tear myself away from a people who are exceedingly dear to me, being the fruits of my labors in this place and seals of my ministry.”

He now travelled northward. We trace his progress briefly. At Suffolk he preached to a fine congregation out of doors. With William Watters, who was yet in Virginia, he went to Hogg’s Island. Then he crossed James River and rode to Williamsburg; travelled through a fine country to New Castle, a small town on a branch of York River. There he hired a boy to go round and call the people together, and at one o’clock preached to a fine congregation. At Fredericksburg he obtained the court-house for preaching, and again hired a boy to publish it, and at five o’clock the house of justice was nearly filled by the principal inhabitants, and “the word was clothed with power.” At Dumfries, on the Potomac, he preached at an inn, and thence went to Alexandria, where he was very sick, but preached in the court-house, which was almost full, on Monday, May 17, 1773.

At Alexandria he was peculiarly tired. Money that had been intrusted to him was stolen from his trunk. Occasion was taken of the afflicting circumstance to asperse the preacher. He describes the affair thus: "When I returned to my room at the Inn to prepare to set forward on my journey, I found my trunk broken open, and forty pounds, Pennsylvania currency, taken away. This was a trial indeed, as the money belonged to a gentleman who brought it to me in Norfolk to pay to his correspondent in Burlington, New Jersey. I thought it best to stir about it immediately, went to a magistrate and got a search warrant to examine the house. We searched every place in the house where we had the least suspicion, but all to no purpose. I then spoke with the chamber-maid—a girl from Ireland—and as I was fully persuaded she was the thief, endeavored to prevail with her to confess, but she in the most solemn manner denied it. Notwithstanding, it was generally believed she was guilty, and I was advised to take her before a magistrate and commit her to jail. When this was done, she denied it in such an awful manner, that I began to be in doubt whether she might not be innocent, and had several negroes examined, and searched the kitchen, stable, etc., but nothing could be found.

"Hitherto I had a hope the money would be found, but everything looked so dark, I now began to be in doubt. Some gentlemen in the town have given it out that I have not been robbed at all, but have invented this affecting tale in order to get money from the inhabitants. This cut me to the very heart, as I was a stranger in the place and professed to be a preacher of the gospel. But I was enabled to spread all my troubles before the Lord, and he gave me a hope that notwithstanding the darkness of the prospect, he would undertake for me. As I was walking in the garden a poor young man came to me and presently withdrew. Seeing no appearance of anything hidden in the garden, I went into the house, where I had not been long before he came running to me almost out of breath and cried, 'O Mr. Pilmoor, I have found your money.' We found eight pounds wanting, but I

was glad I had recovered so much, especially as the gentlemen will now be convinced of their slanderous reports and will perhaps think more favorably of me in future. At any rate religion will not suffer." After he returned to Philadelphia he received a remittance of a portion of the remainder of the stolen money, and learned that the Irish chamber-maid whom he had suspicioned was the thief.

Leaving Alexandria May 18, 1773, Pilmoor went to Georgetown, and called on Mr. James Wood, whose wife was a convert of his ministry and belonged to St. George's, Philadelphia. The following day they sent an invitation to their neighbors to hear their former pastor. He preached to a congregation of the *poor* at eleven o'clock. After preaching he was quite sick. Becoming better he says "I resolved not to lose a moment, but begged them to call the people together again, which they did, and I preached to many more hearers than we had in the forenoon. The next morning I set off very early and went about eight miles to Bladensburg."

He was now approaching Baltimore. So long unknown as the founder of Methodism in that important American city, he must ever hereafter bear that distinction. The vine which he there planted in the summer of 1772 lived and was fruitful while he was absent in the South. It has been one of the most luxuriant of all that the sons of Wesley have planted in America. Pilmoor now returns to give it further nurture.

From Bladensburg to Baltimore the distance was forty-two miles of very bad road, "so that I was heartily tired," he says, "when I came to my friend, Mr. George Dagan's, where I met with the kindest reception." The next day he went among his friends in Baltimore, who rejoiced to see him again. In the evening of May 21 he took his "old stand on the hill," and preached the gospel "to a listening multitude; the evening was calm and remarkably pleasant and the people all deeply attentive."

The next day he was in the Baltimore jail, where the tears of the prisoners told of the effect of the Gospel upon their hearts. The same evening he preached again out of doors.

He preached in the Dutch Church on Sunday, May 23, at seven in the morning and at ten in the English Presbyterian meeting. They begged him to preach again in the afternoon, which he did, and at night had a refreshing season with the Methodist society at Mr. Dagan's. After the meeting he met a young man who was one of his hearers in Wales, who brought him good news from a far country. On Monday he went a distance of about seven miles, where he "found a large congregation waiting and began immediately to preach Christ." The following day he went to John Watters's, at or near Deer Creek. The next day many of the neighbors assembled, to whom he preached.

Pilmoor anticipated much pleasure in visiting his dear friend, Josias Dallam, but on going to his house he found that he and Mrs. Dallam were in Philadelphia. He remained all night at their home and had a happy visit with the rest of the family. The next day he preached at Bushtown. He then returned to Josias Dallam's, and at the desire of the servants preached in the evening to a fine congregation. The following day, May 28, 1773, he went to Richard Dallam's, where he preached at about noon. In the afternoon he heard that Mr. Josias Dallam had returned to his home. "I hastened away to see him," he says, "and spent the evening in the utmost harmony. Just before we went to rest Mr. Boardman came in. As I had not seen him in more than a year my heart rejoiced exceedingly at our meeting, and we found our spirits most closely united in the fellowship of the gospel and the communion of saints."

Boardman had been travelling widely since he and Pilmoor last met. He was in Maryland the previous year, as we learn from Asbury, and in that year he also was in New England. He had made somewhere a tour, an account of which he gave in a letter to Mary Thorn. The letter is dated simply May 25th, and probably was written just before he and Pilmoor met at the home of Mr. Dallam at Deer Creek, on the above occasion. It was written at Mr. Steadham's, and a Mr. Steadham was then a leading Methodist in Wilmington, Delaware. In this epistle Boardman said: "I have been

through my circuit. The rides are long, the roads bad, the living very poor. But what more than compensates for these difficulties is a prospect of advancing the Redeemer's kingdom, in bringing sinners to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. In the greater part of this round the people were wicked and ignorant to a lamentable degree—destitute of the fear and regardless of the worship of God. But such a reformation is wrought among them as shows the amazing love and almighty power of God. It would do you good to hear them, when the business of the day is done in the fields, wrestling in prayer with God, or singing his praise with joyful lips.

“I trust you find your own soul alive to God, growing in grace, advancing in knowledge of Christ's love, the devil's malice, your own great nothingness. Expect much; you cannot be disappointed. Do what little you can to bring much glory to God. Forsake yourself and sometimes your beloved retirement to stir up yourself and others to go forward. Charge your heart neither to murmur nor repine, but to trust without wavering, to believe without doubting, to be active without fainting. Very soon you shall praise and adore without ceasing.”

Pilmoor rode forward on the 29th of May, to Mr. Giles's, at Rock Run, where he met with and preached to many friends. On Sunday morning he preached again to a large congregation. Accompanied by several friends he went “to Mr. Dallam's, at Deer Creek, which is the first place I preached in Maryland,” he says, “and found a vast multitude of people gathered from all parts. As I was obliged to exert myself, and the day being very hot, it fatigued me so much that I was almost exhausted.”

Pilmoor, on the 31st of May, hastened forward to Philadelphia. With difficult travelling he reached Christeen Bridge, where he preached to “a vast congregation.” June first he preached at New Castle, Delaware. In the evening he preached at Wilmington to a large congregation. The next day at eleven he preached at Chester, and thence went to Kingcess, where he was met by a number of Philadelphians.

At Philadelphia, he says, "I was received by my honorable friend, Mr. John Wallace, as if I had been an angel of God." He left Philadelphia for the South May 27, 1772, and returned to it June 2, 1773.

Concerning this tour he now in Philadelphia indulged reminiscent thoughts. "It is above a year," he writes, "since I left this city. I set out with a consciousness of duty, and was determined to obey what to me was a *call* from above. I was totally unacquainted with the people, the road, and everything else. I only knew that there were multitudes of souls scattered through a vast extent of country, and was willing to encounter any difficulty and undergo the greatest hardships so I might win them to Christ. My plan was to follow the leadings of Providence, and go wherever the 'tutelary cloud' should direct. With this view, I turned my face to the South, and went forward above a thousand miles through the provinces, visiting most of the towns between Philadelphia and Savannah in Georgia, where I preached the gospel of Christ. At Savannah I had several invitations to go forward towards Florida, but my mind was so strongly drawn towards the people where I had already been, who entreated me to turn my face towards the North and visit them again, that I resolved to comply with their request, and ventured through the country again. I found to my great satisfaction that I had not labored in vain. I have been in many dangers by land and by water. My difficulties in passing through so many provinces without a guide have been very considerable and often discouraging. I can say with the utmost confidence, I have done it with all sincerity and uprightness of heart, and blessed be God, I have not labored in vain. His presence was with me, his word ran, and was glorified, and sinners were savingly converted to God."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ARRIVAL OF RANKIN AND SHADFORD AND THEIR FIRST LABORS IN AMERICA.

THOMAS RANKIN went up to the Conference which opened at Leeds on the fourth of August, 1772, and says: "Here I met with Mr. Webb, who had lately arrived from America." George Shadford was also there and writes: "I went to the Leeds Conference, where I first saw Captain Webb. When he warmly exhorted preachers to go to America, I felt my heart stirred within me to go, more especially when I understood that many hundreds of precious souls were perishing through lack of knowledge, scattered up and down in various parts of the woods and had none to warn them of their danger."

Both Rankin and Shadford at this Conference were designated for America. "Mr. Rankin and I," says Shadford, "offered ourselves to go the spring following, when I received a letter from Mr. Wesley informing me that I was to embark with Captain Webb at Bristol." Thus read the letter: "Dear George:—The time is arrived for you to embark for America. You must go down to Bristol, where you will meet with Thomas Rankin, Captain Webb and his wife. I let you loose, George, on the great continent of America. Publish your message in the open face of the sun and do all the good you can. I am, dear George, yours affectionately, John Wesley."

Wesley was not content with the administration of the American section of his world-parish. What all the reasons for his dissatisfaction were probably cannot now be ascertained. Rankin says: "Mr. Wesley had been dissatisfied with the conduct of those who superintended the rising work

there, and while I was in London he had frequently mentioned this to me. I had made it a matter of much prayer, and it appeared to me that the way was open for me to go. When the work in America came before the Conference Mr. Wesley determined to appoint me superintendent of the whole.* Rankin's appointment then was settled early in August, 1772. Boardman at that time was in charge of the American field. Therefore the assertions by Dr. Stevens, that "Asbury had probably asked to be relieved by such a successor," and that "difficulties had arisen under the administration of Asbury," are clearly erroneous.† Asbury had not then superseded Boardman in the American superintendency. Not until more than two months after Rankin's designation as Wesley's superintendent in America did Asbury receive his commission to that office; for on the tenth of October, 1772, the latter in his Journal says: "I received a letter from Mr. Wesley in which he appointed me to act as assistant." It is apparent, then, that whatever difficulties may have arisen, they did not occur under Asbury's administration as "assistant" prior to Rankin's appointment; nor could he have "asked to be relieved by such a successor," for the reason that up to that time he had not been promoted to the superintendency. Wesley intrusted him with the responsibility thereof from October, 1772, until the arrival of his already designated successor, which was on the third day of the following June. We have seen that after Asbury came hither the societies in Philadelphia and New York were disturbed by his criticisms and apparent exercise of power, but it appears he was not at that time chief in authority. On the contrary, it is plain from Asbury's statements that Boardman was in charge until October, 1772.

We have seen in former pages evidence of strained relations between Wesley and his first two missionaries to this country. We are now to see a fuller account thereof by Pilmoor. Just after his return from the South, and the very next day after the arrival of Rankin and Shadford at Phila-

* Rankin in *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, Vol. V., pp. 183-4. London.

† See Stevens's *History of the M. E. Church*, Vol. I., p. 142.

delphia, Pilmoor in that city wrote as follows: "A day of sharp tribulation. Since I came to America I have had innumerable trials, and many of them from persons I least of all expected. For more than two years Mr. Wesley, who should have been a compassionate father to us, has treated us in a manner not to be mentioned. During that time we have not had so much as a single letter we could read to the people. Nothing but jealous reflections, unkind suspicions, and sharp reproofs came from under his hand, which greatly discouraged us in the work, and would certainly have driven us away if we had not regarded the work of the Lord above everything. For a long time I was able to bear it without hurting my mind. But at length the trials came on so fast that I began to reason with the enemy and my own evil heart; then the usage I met with seized on my spirit and threw me into such distress that it presently destroyed my health and brought such weakness upon my whole nervous system that I was on the very borders of melancholy and in the utmost danger of losing my senses. When I reflected on the duties I had gone through, the hardships I had suffered, the rectitude of heart with which I had acted, and the glorious success that had attended my labors, I was greatly amazed that Mr. Wesley should treat me as if I had been the foulest offender and an enemy to God and mankind. O, my God, I cry to thee."

No doubt letters containing criticisms of the preachers reached Wesley from this side of the Atlantic. That he was too ready to accept as just the reflections of fault-finders and the animadversions of those whose views of the work differed from those honestly entertained by Boardman and Pilmoor may be true. That they labored in this country with general and marked acceptability to the societies, and with devotion, diligence, and success, is beyond question. They toiled here also when other Wesleyan preachers were unwilling to venture upon this remote field. An undated letter from Pilmoor to a friend in England, who seems to have been a preacher, and which was written in New York before Asbury came hither, breathes the heroic spirit and illustrates the toils and sacri-

fices of the missionaries here. In that letter Pilmoor says : "I have been waiting with eager expectation for some of the brethren to come over to our Macedonia and help us. But, ah me ! there are so many things to give up before one can cross the Atlantic that it seems too much even for a Methodist preacher. I find by Mr. Wesley's letter that none were willing to come, so that it is very uncertain whether ever we shall have the opportunity of returning to Old England or not. But blessed be God, we know what was our intention in leaving all that was dear to us in order to visit those dear, dear Americans ; and as we came in singleness of heart, the Lord has greatly blessed us, both in New York and Philadelphia. Our congregations are very large and very serious ; trifling seems to have no place at present, for sinners are engaged about the vast concerns of the invisible world ; even the poor negroes are turning to God, and seeking to wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. We have about twenty black women who meet in one class, and I think upon the whole they are as happy as any class. Many people of superior rank come to hear the word and are very friendly. The chief difficulty is the want of ordination, and I believe we shall be obliged to procure it in some form or other. Perhaps you will say I speak too much in favor of the Americans, but I do assure you the half is not yet told you, and I freely wish you would come and prove the truth of what I say. If you will but come I assure you that you will not want anything that is good. The people here are very kind, and take pleasure in providing for the Methodist preacher." *

That such men, so abundant in labor, should thus have been subjected to irritating criticism from Mr. Wesley seems unaccountable. They went forth weeping, and returned with many sheaves. Pilmoor, however, declares that "Mr. Boardman and I had been shamefully misrepresented to Mr. Wesley." Rankin now was put in charge of the Wesleyan cause

* This letter is given by Lockwood in his *Western Pioneers*. He asserts that the original manuscript has no address, but has as a superscription "To Miss Bosanquet." Lockwood thinks that it was probably addressed to Christopher Hopper.

in America, and entered upon his work as ruler under Wesley June 4, 1773. Soon after his arrival at Philadelphia he indicated in his Journal one of the reasons why Boardman and Pilmoor were censured. "From what I see and hear," he writes, "and so far as I can judge, if my brethren who first came over had been more attentive to our discipline there would have been a more glorious work by this time in many places. Their love-feasts and meetings of society were laid open to all their particular friends, so that their number did not increase, and the minds of our best friends were thereby hurt." *

Thomas Rankin was born at Dunbar, in the town of East Lothian, Scotland. In his youth he learned music and dancing, which he found affected unfavorably his occasional aspirations toward a spiritual life. He was benefited by the preaching of the Rev. Mr. Lindsay, of North Leith. At Edinburgh he also heard excellent preaching. At length he partook of the sacrament of the supper, and found a happiness he had never known before. Then he heard Whitefield, whose ministry gave him clearer light, and led him into a fuller and more definite religious experience, so that he declares "I had no more doubt of my interest in the Lord Jesus Christ than I had of my existence. I could declare that the Son of Man had still power to forgive sins, and that he had pardoned my sins, even mine."

He came to America on business after his conversion, and spent several months in Charleston, where he found the people "appeared to be a dissipated and thoughtless generation." While there he chiefly attended a Baptist chapel, whose pastor was "the only minister he heard who seemed to speak home to the consciences of his hearers." The churches, however, were observed by Rankin to be "pretty well filled, and the people seemed to hear with attention." He found that he was "not at home and did not enjoy that depth of communion with God, either in public or private, that he experienced in Edinburgh." He made a stormy voyage back to Britain.

* Life of Rankin, Jackson's Lives, Vol. V., p. 191.

Rankin again repeatedly heard Whitefield, whose sermons proved a great blessing to him. He soon recovered all that peace and joy he had felt before he went to America. After a time he began to preach and was sent by Wesley to a circuit. At the Conference of 1762 he was appointed to Sheffield circuit, next to the Devonshire circuit, and in 1764, to Cornwall. He continued in the English Wesleyan itinerancy, going from circuit to circuit until the Conference of 1772, when he was designated by Wesley for the transatlantic field. As he was not to sail until the next spring it was determined that until then he should labor in York Circuit. There he remained until about the end of March, 1773.

In coming to America he parted from one whom he deeply loved and who subsequently became his wife. But his zeal for the work swallowed up all other concerns. He rode to Birmingham to see and receive instructions from Wesley. He had an interview with him which was pleasing, instructive, and affecting, and which he hoped never to forget. On Good Friday, April 9, 1773, he with Captain and Mrs. Webb, George Shadford, and Joseph Yearby sailed from Bristol on the ship "Sally," commanded by Captain Young, for Philadelphia.

George Shadford was born at Scotter, Lincolnshire, England, January 19, 1739. He had early religious impressions, which, however, were dissipated by his natural sportiveness and his indulgence in frolicsome pastimes, unsuitable reading and company. He joined the militia, and while his company lay in quarters at Gainsborough he heard a Methodist preacher and "received more light from that single sermon than all that he ever heard in his life before." He went, every Sunday that there was preaching, to the same place. His seriousness provoked ridicule from his companions, and he fell into sin "as bad or worse than ever." Not long afterward he again came under strong conviction. Sometimes deeply concerned, and at other times gay and frivolous, he came to the age of twenty-three, when, on the first Sunday in May, 1762, he twice heard a Methodist preacher. Towards the end of the second of those sermons he trembled, shook,

wept. He cried out, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." At once he believed and in an instant he was filled with divine love. A fortnight after he united with the Methodist Society and became an ardent, active, happy worker in the cause. He soon began to preach. In 1768 Mr. Wesley called him into the itinerancy and appointed him to West Cornwall; the next year he was sent to Kent and the two succeeding years he was at Norwich. "After a comfortable passage of eight weeks he arrived safe in Philadelphia," and with his fellow-voyagers, Rankin, Webb, and Yearby, was "kindly received by a hospitable and loving people."

Pilmoor returned to Philadelphia from his Southern itinerary on the second of June, 1773, just in time to welcome Wesley's third ministerial deputation, for on the next day after his return Rankin, Shadford, and Webb arrived in that city. Their arrival was an occasion for joy to the American Methodists. Under date of June 3 Pilmoor writes: "Captain Webb, with his lady, with two preachers, Messrs. Rankin and Shadford, arrived from England. Our hearts were greatly rejoiced at the sight of more laborers." Asbury, too, was then in Philadelphia. His Journal is silent concerning Pilmoor's return, but on June 3 he noted the arrival of Webb and three English preachers and the "great comfort" he received from this ministerial reinforcement. After stating that Mr. Rankin preached a good sermon, presumably the day that he arrived, Asbury remarks: "He will not be admired as a preacher, but as a disciplinarian he will fill his place."

It was not on the day of his arrival, however, that Rankin preached, as Asbury's statement under that date would lead us to presume, and as Dr. Stevens mistakenly asserts, but the evening of the next day, as Rankin himself affirms. After preaching he "met the leaders of classes and bands." The following evening "Mr. Shadford," says Rankin, "gave a warm exhortation." That exhortation Pilmoor describes. "In the evening," he says, "Mr. Shadford gave an exhortation which he called True Old Methodism, and seemed to intimate the people had wanted it till now."

Having reached the American shore, Rankin sought help

from on high. "As I am now by the providence of God called to labor for a season on this continent," he exclaims, "do thou O Holy One of Israel stand by thy weak and ignorant servant. Show thyself glorious in power and in Divine Majesty. Let thine arm be made bare and stretched out to save, so that wonders and signs may be done in the name of the holy child Jesus."

The first Sunday after their arrival Rankin preached in the morning in Philadelphia and Pilmoor at night. Three days subsequently Pilmoor went with Mr. Wallace to a place in New Jersey called Newtown, where he "preached to a small congregation, met a little society, and returned to the city." On Friday, the eleventh of June, Rankin, according to Pilmoor, left Philadelphia for New York. The same day he joined Asbury at Trenton, and the latter says: "After dinner and prayer we set off together for Princeton. On Saturday we reached New York. Our friends there having previous notice of our coming, kindly met us on the dock where we landed." That day Pilmoor met the children in Philadelphia. Rankin does not say where he was on the next day—Sunday, June 13th—but his Journal implies, by the lack of any statement to the contrary, that he was yet in Philadelphia. He was not there, however, but in New York. Asbury preached in John Street in the morning from the second and fourth of Ruth. "During the sermon," says Rankin, "I was led to reflect on the motives which induced me to leave my native land and Christian friends and brethren and cross the Atlantic Ocean to a land and people unknown. I could appeal to God with the utmost sincerity of heart that I had only one thing in view, his glory and the salvation of souls. In a moment the cloud broke, and the power of God rested upon my soul, and every gloom fled away as morning shades before the rising sun. I then had faith to believe that I should see his glory."

At the hour of six in the afternoon Rankin opened his ministry in New York with a sermon, and then had a memorable season with the society. "The Lord was in the midst," he says, "as a flame among dry stubble. Great was our re-

joicing in the God of our salvation. This has indeed been a day of the Son of Man." Of this occasion, Asbury, who was present, writes: "Mr. Rankin dispensed the word of truth with power. It reached the hearts of many." Captain Webb was also in New York that day, and in the afternoon he and Rankin and Asbury went to St. Paul's Church on Broadway and received the holy communion.

The next day, June 14th, Asbury preached at five in the morning and Rankin in the evening. "The Lord was in the word," says Rankin. "I spoke my mind freely and fully to the society, and I trust not in vain. One thing struck me a good deal this day. I was really surprised at the extravagance of dress I beheld, and in particular among the women."

Pilmoor preached twice in Philadelphia the same Sunday that Rankin and Asbury preached in New York. In the morning "the congregation was pretty large" in St. George's, and in the evening it was "vast." Pilmoor, in addition to preaching on both occasions, met the society and concluded the day with prayer for a revival of the work which he declares "at present is exceedingly dead." The next day he visited "the people from house to house," and in the evening he preached to a very large congregation with "more liberty and happiness," he says, "than I have felt since my return from the South."

Rankin soon discovered that a good work of grace was in progress in New York. "I had an opportunity of conversing with many of the members of the society in private," he says, "and had reason to bless God that I found several deeply awakened to a sense of inbred sin, and earnestly seeking deliverance from the last remains thereof. Others, who had been resting in good desires, were cut to the heart, and cried out with tears, 'What shall I do to be saved?' Some also I found who were newly awakened and desired to be admitted into the society." Asbury, in returning to New York from a week in the country the latter part of June, notes the special satisfaction he found "in the revival of religion which has lately taken place in this city." He also

found that Rankin "had been well employed in settling matters pertaining to the Society."

Captain Webb started for Albany and Asbury for New Rochelle on the sixteenth of June, while Rankin seems to have continued in New York. In the meantime Pilmoor was in Philadelphia, where he was taken ill at the Intercession on Friday, June 18, but went to church again and attempted to speak in the evening. When he was done his weakness was such that he could scarcely get home. He became so sick that there was but little hope of his recovery. When he became convalescent he went to Mr. Supplee's, at Methacton, where for some days he remained in the enjoyment of familiar scenes and friends and of country air. While he was there two ladies of Philadelphia, Mrs. Shippen and Mrs. Hinderson, went twenty miles to visit him. He was also gratified in receiving still another visitor there. "My dearest friend," he says, "Mr. John Wallace, came from the city to see me. His company and conversation greatly cheered and comforted my mind."

Shadford went to Trenton a few days after his arrival and labored a month in New Jersey, in which time he added thirty-five persons to the society. He was an awakening evangelist and greatly successful in bringing sinners to repentance.

Asbury left New York for Staten Island on the 26th of June, and remained there, preaching at several places, until July. He and Rankin were together in John Street on the first Sunday of that month. The people in good numbers attended the preaching. "Many were touched and some greatly comforted" at the love-feast which concluded the day. "The people spoke with life and liberty, and in particular some of the blacks." Rankin that day preached at seven in the morning. "Blessed be God," he writes, "I found freedom and tenderness to apply the word in a particular manner to those who were groaning for pardon of sin and for purity of heart. Brother Asbury preached in the evening a home Methodist sermon, and the Lord crowned it with a divine blessing." Three days later Asbury preached

to a number of soldiers and others behind the barracks. He complains that he "had been grieved by the false and deceitful doings of some particular persons." In an interview which he had two days later with Mr. L. [Lupton], the latter, he writes, "was pleased to say 'he did not know but the church-door would be shut against me,' and that 'some persons would not suffer matters to go on so.'" It is thus apparent that only a few days before the first Conference all was not tranquil in New York Methodism. The disturbances apparently retarded the progress of the cause in that city, as the reports of the number of members at that period would indicate. It is also apparent that if persons wrote to Mr. Wesley after the manner that Mr. Lupton spoke to Asbury of the state of things in New York, he would be concerned for his charge in America. Some three days after this significant interview with Lupton, Asbury "set off towards Philadelphia," where he was to sit in the first American Methodist Conference.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FIRST METHODIST CONFERENCE IN AMERICA.

FROM the year 1744 Mr. Wesley assembled his preachers annually in conference. In imitation of the Mother Methodism the American preachers gathered in a like capacity July 14, 1773. In only seven years the movement begun by Barbara Heck had swept from the Hudson to beyond the Chesapeake, and northward into Boston, and now in developing an Annual Conference reached a higher stage in its progress. The church in Philadelphia which under Joseph Pilmoor's efficient ministry was purchased by the Methodists in 1769, opened its portals to welcome this significant and historic convocation that marked a new epoch in Methodism, for by it the societies in America were united into a connection as real as the connection in England.

The Conference was appointed to convene on Tuesday, July 13, 1773, but it did not open until the next day. It met while the first controversy which the new movement encountered was causing irritation. This controversy related to the conduct of the work, and might appropriately be called the disciplinary controversy. Asbury, no doubt, and Pilmoor and Boardman likewise, anticipated the assembling of the Conference with deep interest, if not indeed with profound solicitude, as the matters about which there was disagreement would be considered by it. Asbury failed to reach Philadelphia until Thursday, July 15, 1773, which was the second day of the session. He left New York four days previously, and should have arrived at Philadelphia at least on Tuesday, on which day Pilmoor says: "We had appointed to meet in Conference in Philadelphia and several of us met at our church at six in the morning. As two of the preachers had

not arrived we agreed to adjourn until the next day. At seven in the evening Mr. Boardman preached a most excellent sermon on the important work of the Christian Ministry."

Boardman's sermon on the eve of the Conference was no doubt salutary in its influence. He was a man of a sweet, loving spirit and well understood the delicate and responsible situation which the Conference was to face.

Rankin, Shadford, and Yearby had not been in the country quite six weeks, and they formed a third of the assembly. Webb returned from England with them and was again in the midst of his fellow-toilers in the American field. Pilmoor thus describes this important and historic synod: "Wednesday morning we met and entered upon our business in the fear of the Most High God. As Mr. Boardman and I had been shamefully misrepresented to Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Rankin sent over to take the whole management upon himself, it was expected we would have pretty close work. Had we given place to nature and followed our own temporal interest it would probably have been so. But we considered and preferred the interests of religion and the honor of God, above all the riches and honors the whole world can bestow, and were determined to submit to anything consistent with a good conscience rather than injure the work of the Lord. In this spirit we were kept during the Conference. We consulted together under the tender visitations of the Almighty and were favored with the presence and blessing of God. So the enemy of souls was disappointed, and all our matters were settled in peace." Rankin does not speak of any lack of harmony in the Conference. "We parted in love," he says in his Journal, "and also with a full resolution to spread genuine Methodism in public and private with all our might." A pious determination to sacrifice personal prepossessions and prejudices and to hold conflicting opinions in abeyance may have saved the young Methodism of America from much injury, if not from disaster, at that memorable Conference.

Asbury's few words concerning the Conference indicate that disturbing forces were there. He says that he arrived in Philadelphia "on Thursday, but did not find such harmony

as I could wish for." He declares that "there were some debates among the preachers in this Conference relative to the conduct of some who had manifested a desire to abide in the cities and live like gentlemen." He also makes the further declaration that "three years out of four have been already spent in the cities." Furthermore, he asserts that "it was also found that money had been wasted, improper leaders appointed and many of our rules broken."

At this distance of time it does not seem to have been charitable or fair to place in a permanent record such reflections respecting men of as great devotedness and laboriousness as were Boardman and Pilmoor. They did, it is true, concentrate their efforts chiefly, but not by any means wholly, in two strategic American cities until they were reinforced by Asbury and Wright. In each of those cities there was a considerable society with a church edifice in debt. In neither city was the property deeded to the society until a proper conveyance thereof was made under their guidance. We have seen how again and again Pilmoor went forth into the rural parts and proclaimed Christ to the rustic populations before Asbury saw the American shore, and no doubt Boardman did the same. If they evinced "a desire to abide in the cities," it was because of the urgency of the work there and not from a vain wish to *live like gentlemen*. From the writings they have left, and the traditions respecting them, it is quite apparent that Boardman and Pilmoor *were* gentlemen, and that as such they did no discredit to the cause for which they toiled incessantly. After Asbury and Wright came to their help they showed no inclination to confine their labors so much to Philadelphia and New York, but went forth, one southward and the other northward, to seek and to save the perishing. Boardman not only travelled to New England, but after returning thence he went to Maryland. Pilmoor was absent a year in his southern travels and labors. Asbury did not make a journey of the extent of that made by Pilmoor until he had been in the country more than thirteen years. Nor was it because Asbury pressed them out of the cities that they travelled abroad over so

many provinces, for Boardman, and not Asbury, was at that time in control. Pilmoor, as we have seen, on the last day of April, 1772, distinctly says: "As we have now got preachers to take care of the people that God has graciously raised up by us in New York and Philadelphia and all the adjacent places, Mr. Boardman and I have agreed to go forth in the name of the Lord and preach the gospel in the waste places of the wilderness." And from the elevated point of vision afforded by the first Conference in America, he was able to declare, as he did in his Journal: "It is now near four years since Mr. Boardman and I arrived in America. We have constantly labored in the great work of the Lord and have preached the gospel through the Continent for more than a thousand miles, and formed many societies, and have above a thousand members, most of whom are well grounded in the gospel and savingly converted unto God. This hath God wrought, and we will exalt and glorify his adorable Name." I have failed to discover in Pilmoor's writings one word which indicates that Asbury's words or example in any degree influenced him and Boardman to go out from the cities and prosecute their laborious itinerancies in the country.

Asbury informs us that on April 2, 1772, he came to Philadelphia, "and finding Brother Boardman and Brother Wright there, was much comforted. Brother Boardman's plan was that he [Boardman] should go to Boston; Brother Pilmoor to Virginia; Brother Wright to York; and that I should stay three months in Philadelphia. With this I was well pleased."* Boardman's plan of travels for Pilmoor and himself was his own, and Asbury does not intimate that he had any relation to its inception or formulation. He merely says that the plan which left Wright in New York and himself in Philadelphia and sent Boardman to New England and Pilmoor to Virginia "pleased" him "well." Boardman at that time made the American appointments, as he was Mr. Wesley's General Assistant. Pilmoor and Boardman, however, agreed, as the former says, to "go forth in the waste places;" and in making that argreement they were

* Asbury's Journal, Vol. I., p. 26.

not, so far as appears, affected by any promptings beyond those which came of their own zeal to cultivate as extensively as possible "Immanuel's ground."

Why Asbury should have so begrudged two chief cities the time and the toil Boardman and Pilmoor had given to them we are not informed. The cities certainly were not less important to the rising Methodism of America than the sparsely populated country. At this distance of time it seems to have been a wise generalship that planned and wrought for the intrenchment of Methodism in New York and Philadelphia. Powerfully fortified there it could move out more swiftly and mightily over the land. The fact that an Annual Conference was now assembled in a spacious church in Philadelphia, which was secured under the administration of Pilmoor, and from which were about to be sent forth into various and distant quarters flaming heralds of free grace, ought, it would seem, to have silenced these unwise, if well meant, criticisms.

In devoting themselves principally to two chief cities Pilmoor and Boardman followed apostolic examples, and also in a good degree the example of Mr. Wesley. Wesley maintained headquarters in London. "The Foundry" and subsequently "City-Road" and other metropolitan points received much of his attention and labors. The Church of the Apostles was chiefly in cities. So markedly was this so that Renan was almost justified in saying as he did, "This proselytism was confined to cities. The first Christian Apostles did not preach in the country." Damascus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Athens, Rome, Jerusalem, are conspicuous in the records of Christian propagandism in the Apostolic age. In those great centres of life and thought the church lifted her banners and thence advanced upon the surrounding regions. "From Athens Paul went to Corinth. He knew the importance of great cities. Without neglecting smaller places that came in his way, it was always an object with him to preach the Gospel where men's minds were sharpened by the collision of numbers, and where if he was successful a church would be gathered from which as from that at Thes-

salonica, 'the word of the Lord might sound forth' into all the region round about." * It was a joy to St. Paul that the faith of the Christians in the great city of Rome was "spoken of throughout the whole world." The walls of St. George's, it would seem, must have silently rebuked the criticisms of the urban labors of Pilmoor and Boardman, which, according to Asbury's report, found expression in that goodly temple at the first American Conference.

With Embury no longer in New York, and Webb absent in England; with Boardman travelling abroad from New York to Massachusetts and afterward to Maryland; and Pilmoor and Williams in the distant South, the cities seem not to have prospered greatly during the year following the spring of 1772. While these preachers were away Asbury and Wright remained much of the time in the region of the Hudson and the Delaware. The "old book" of John Street shows that Wright labored much in New York from the summer of 1772 to near the end of the spring of 1773, and Asbury was also considerably in the two cities in the same period, though for nearly half a year he too was absent in Maryland. Boardman was in New York a part of the year that preceded the first Conference, and, no doubt, he was also somewhat in Philadelphia. Still the reports of the number of members in the cities show a decline. At the close of Pilmoor's first term of service in Philadelphia, more than three years previously, the members in that city exceeded the number that were now reported there. In March, 1770, Pilmoor affirmed that there were 182 members in Philadelphia to whom he had "given tickets" and who met "in class and attended to all the discipline of the Methodists as well as the people in London or Bristol." In the middle of July, 1773, only 180 members were enumerated in the same city, and precisely the same number were reported from New York. Before Pilmoor departed to the South he was, as we have seen, very solicitous about the troubles in Philadelphia and the diminished congregations, all of which he attributed to Asbury's course in that city.

* St. Paul, His Life and Ministry, by T. Binney. London, 1866.

The exercise of discipline in the cities about which Asbury held rigid ideas seems to have declined with the absence, for a year, of Pilmoor, Webb, and Williams, and the considerable absence also of Boardman and Asbury. Rankin, who is reputed to have been a strict disciplinarian, said at the time of the Conference of 1773: "Our discipline was not properly attended to except at Philadelphia and New York, and even in those places it was on the decline." It appears then that discipline had previously been maintained in the above cities, but when the regular ministrations of Boardman and Pilmoor therein had mostly ceased it suffered "decline."

Rankin was in New York prior to the Conference, and his ministry apparently was profitable there. He was appointed to that city at the Conference. Peace does not seem to have been restored, however. Trials such as Asbury had experienced there appear to have threatened Rankin, for on the last day of the Conference, namely, July 16th, Asbury, in his Journal, wrote: "I understand that some dissatisfied persons in New York threaten to shut the church door against Mr. Rankin. If they should be bold enough to take this step we shall see what the consequence will be, and no doubt the Lord will bring all their evil deeds to light. O that it may be for the salvation of their precious souls!"

John Street evidently was not closed against Rankin. After he had entered upon his work he met the society on the 15th of August, 1773, and spoke his mind "plainly on some things which," he says, "tended to hinder the work of God, and in which I sincerely desired to see an amendment. If love and harmony do not prevail among leaders and people, it is impossible for the work to prosper among them. A party spirit has greatly hindered the work of God in this city. I long to see it torn up by the very roots." A little over a fortnight after this passage was written by Rankin, Pilmoor heard him preach in John Street, and only "a few serious people" were present. Pilmoor's report of the state of affairs reveals the sad fact that there was agitation in New York. "My heart is pained," Pilmoor writes September 15, 1773; "my heart is pained to see such a change in this

city. For some years the chapel was too small; now it is large enough, and is very seldom filled. All this is owing to the wonderful manner in which our affairs have been conducted. O, my God, look in pity upon us and revive us again after the time that we have suffered adversity." The divergence from the ideas and methods of Boardman and Pilmoor by Wesley's representatives, who entered into their labors, was evidently not agreeable to them; and it was not to be expected that the flocks which they had nurtured, and to a considerable degree had gathered, would fail to share somewhat the views of their beloved shepherds. Hence the "party spirit" which Rankin deprecated, and the ungentle expressions that had been previously called forth from important laymen by Asbury.

We have already observed Asbury's assertion that it was found at the Conference that the work had been so negligently administered as that "money had been wasted, improper leaders appointed, and many of our rules broken." *Where* these sad things happened, or whether they were general, Asbury does not say. Too much pastoral attention to the cities and defective discipline in the societies were the things concerning which he, from the first month of his appearance in the field, "cried aloud and spared not." When Rankin arrived Asbury hailed him "as a disciplinarian."

Respecting these disagreements but one side has hitherto been heard. Methodist historians have treated them *ex parte*; and necessarily so, because no voice issued from the other side. After this long silence Joseph Pilmoor's voice is heard, and its utterances are pertinent and emphatic. Dr. Bangs, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," says: "It seems that notwithstanding the vigilance of Mr. Asbury in correcting those abuses which had arisen from the laxity with which discipline had been administered, many disorders still existed for which an adequate remedy had not been provided. These things had been communicated to Mr. Wesley, and he therefore clothed Mr. Rankin with powers superior to any which had been vested in his predecessors in office, in the faithful exercise of which he set him-

self to purifying the societies from corrupt members and restoring things to order." Dr. Abel Stevens, in treating of the first American Conference in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," says: "The preachers had formed societies without classes. The exact discipline of English Methodism had not, in fact, been yet fully introduced into America. Asbury labored hard to conform the American societies to Wesley's model, but had met with no little resistance from preachers and laymen. Rankin had been sent out for this purpose."

Now, had Pilmoor read these passages in prophetic vision the greater part of a century before they were written he could scarcely have replied to them more advantageously for himself and Boardman than he has done.

I will now present in his own language what he says in relation to the matters mentioned by Bangs and Stevens. In the last week of March, 1770, Pilmoor wrote in his Journal thus: "In Philadelphia there are now 182 in society to whom I have given tickets, and they meet in class and attend to all the discipline of the Methodists as well as the people in London or Bristol. This is God's own work."

In January, 1771, Pilmoor was in New York, enjoying a gracious revival season. On the 28th of that month he says: "I began the visitation of the classes, and found much cause for thankfulness on their account. The Methodists in New York are not one whit behind their brethren in Europe, but in many respects before them. This hath God wrought." Six months later, and also six months before Asbury arrived on these shores, Pilmoor in New York, July 27, 1771, said: "I was comforted in meeting three of the classes in the evening. I found the greater part of the members in a prosperous condition, and going on in the name of the Lord."

In July, 1773, just after the dissolution of the first Conference, Pilmoor, in Philadelphia, wrote: "Mr. Boardman and I had been shamefully misrepresented to Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Rankin was sent over to take the whole management upon himself." Thus did Pilmoor by a recital of facts meet in advance the accusatory allegations respecting his and

Boardman's labors as Methodist preachers and disciplinarians in America.

With this survey of the first controversy in American Methodism—a controversy which claimed the attention of the first Conference, and which I have sought to present in the light of historic truth—I shall leave it for more congenial themes. As I dismiss it, however, I must say that whatever difference of opinion respecting the conduct of the work was honestly entertained by Rankin on the one side, and by Boardman and Pilmoor on the other, did not prevent them from uniting in zealous labor for its advancement. Rankin and Pilmoor wrought together in New York soon after the Conference of 1773, and Boardman also joined Rankin in the work in that city. Rankin did not hesitate to speak kindly of them and of their ministry while he was with them. He referred to the simplicity of spirit in Pilmoor “that made him so useful when he first came to America.” The peace and love amid which the first Conference closed, continued with Rankin and the two preachers, who were nearly four years before him in America, until Boardman and Pilmoor returned to England.

One of the subjects that received consideration by the first Conference was that of printing books. Methodism at that early day was not content with proclaiming the Gospel orally, but it also seized the press and made it an adjunct to the pulpit. Wesley published as well as preached. When his first two missionaries came to this country, they brought books for the use of the people. This fact is shown by an entry in the “old book” of John Street, of March 31, 1770, in which Mr. Pilmoor is charged “to cash for books sold, brought from England,” twenty-two pounds and eight shillings. Mr. Wesley laid upon all his preachers the work of selling books.

Robert Williams was foremost in setting the Wesleyan printing-press in motion in America. He printed some of the sermons of Wesley as tracts and scattered them. Philip Gatch, in Maryland, in 1772, received a deeper religious impulse from reading one of Williams's tracts, namely, Wesley's

sermon on "Salvation by Faith." We have seen that he put Methodist books into the hands of the Rev. Devereux Jarratt, in Virginia, which was one of the means of bringing that powerful evangelist into such cordial and efficient co-operation with Methodism. In speaking of his first acquaintance with the Methodists, Jarratt says, "Mr. Williams furnished me with some of their books." Williams's labors in this sphere are described by Jesse Lee, who in 1774 was admitted by him into the Methodist society. "Robert Williams," says Lee, "reprinted many of Wesley's books and spread them through the country to the great advantage of religion. The sermons which he printed in small pamphlets and circulated among the people had a very good effect and gave the people great light and understanding in the nature of the new birth and in the plan of Salvation; and withal they opened the way in many places for our preachers to be invited to preach where they had never been before." Thus to Robert Williams the distinction belongs of originating book-publishing in American Methodism.

Of the six rules that were agreed to by all the preachers in attendance at the first Conference, two related to printing, and in one of them the name of Williams is indelibly recorded. That historic body bore testimony to his enterprise and zeal in this department of Wesleyan propagandism. The germ which he planted has developed into the vast Methodist publishing-houses of our day. Those two rules were as follows:

"None of the preachers in America to reprint any of Mr. Wesley's books without his authority (when it can be gotten) and the consent of their brethren."

"Robert Williams to sell the books he has already printed, but to print no more unless under the above restrictions."

Williams had no voice in the Conference when these rules were under consideration, as he was not there. He and William Watters were in Virginia at that time, and it appears certain that neither of them were north of the Susquehanna until the close of the summer of 1773. Lee, however, asserts that unity in the book-work had become necessary. "Not-

withstanding the good that had been done by the circulation of the books, it now became necessary for the preachers to be all united in the same cause of printing and selling our books.”* Thus the connectional idea was approved and enforced by the first Conference in relation to the use of the press. The practical, far-sighted wisdom of the men composing that Conference is herein shown. The maintainance and dominance of their views on this subject in the denomination has made possible the immense work it has achieved in building its flourishing religious publishing-houses, and in sending out therefrom over the country and the world a varied and holy literature, reminding us of the tree in the vision of the apocalyptic seer which bore a variety of fruit perennially, and whose “leaves were for the healing of the nations.”

The consolidation of the work of printing into unity, which was accomplished by the preachers at the first Conference, contemplated also, as Jesse Lee asserts, the division of “the profits arising therefrom among them,” or their application “to some charitable purpose.” The direction thus and then given to the produce of the business yet continues. This action by the first Conference in unifying the publishing work was a decisive step in the direction of founding those great book concerns which have attained to unrivalled magnitude, and yielded results as beneficent as they have been vast. How mighty and far-reaching have been the effects of the causes in this particular which the first Conference set in operation! No doubt, however, Mr. Wesley’s instructions were the guide of the Conference on this as on other matters, yet the preachers acted by agreeing thereto.

The first Conference also provided a Discipline for the American Methodists. It was not voluminous, but it furnished a few important landmarks by which to steer the new Wesleyan bark. Since that Conference the discipline of the Methodist Connection, like a tree full of sap, has been growing, while useless branches have been removed.

The first of these disciplinary landmarks was the declaration of allegiance to Mr. Wesley. His authority was ac-

* Lee’s History of the Methodists.

cepted as paramount. The first Conference answered "YES" to the following questions: 1. "Ought not the authority of Mr. Wesley and that Conference [Wesley's] to extend to the preachers and people in America, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland?"

2. "Ought not the doctrine and Discipline of the Methodists as contained in the Minutes * to be the sole rule of our conduct, who labor in the connexion with Mr. Wesley in America?" They furthermore declared that "if any preacher deviate from the Minutes we can have no fellowship with them till they change their conduct."

Thus by their unqualified declaration the Rev. John Wesley was acknowledged and received as the ecclesiastical head of the Methodists in this country. "At that time," says Jesse Lee, in his "History of the Methodists," "the Methodists in America considered themselves as much under the direction of Mr. Wesley as were the European Methodists; for they were dependent on him to send them preachers and such directions as he thought best. Of course the preachers agreed to submit to Mr. Wesley's authority and to abide by his doctrine and discipline as established in England. This resolution was both wise and prudent, and tended *to keep them united*, and afterwards it had the same good effect among the private members." Thus at this original Methodist Conference the members and preachers were united in connectional bonds.

Another landmark which the first Conference established related to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The sacramental controversy which a few years later threatened the disruption of the American Methodists was projected upon the Conference of 1773. Robert Strawbridge, as we have seen, administered the sacraments in Maryland before any of the missionaries whom Wesley formally appointed to America went to that province. He did not by this course, however, violate any discipline, for Wes-

*The Minutes referred to were those of the English Wesleyan Conference which had been issued annually since and including 1744. They contained both rules and doctrines.

ley had not yet taken charge of Strawbridge's work through his chosen deputies. Therefore Strawbridge was free to formulate discipline for himself and the converts he gathered together. The scarcity of the sacraments in some parts seemed to make it imperative that the Methodist preachers should administer them to their people. To do so, however, was contrary to the Wesleyan order. When that order was formally established by the Conference of 1773, it seems to have been known, or at least believed by the body, that Robert Strawbridge would not regard it. Both his convictions and practice were hostile to that feature of Wesleyanism. To prevent the spread of Strawbridge's ideas and the influence of his example, the first Conference adopted the following rule: "Every preacher who acts in connection with Mr. Wesley and the brethren who labor in America, is strictly to avoid administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper." Though in the Minutes this rule appears without any qualification, yet Asbury informs us that the Conference qualified it by excepting Strawbridge. The rule, as Asbury in his Journal gives it, was thus: "No preacher in our connexion shall be permitted to administer the Ordinances at this time, except Mr. S., and he under the particular direction of the assistant." Lee says that "none of the annual Minutes were published until the year 1785." The first *Volume* of Minutes was issued from the press in 1795. When the Minutes of the first Conference came to the types years after it was held and after the death of Strawbridge, it was no doubt thought wise to omit the reference to him in the rule concerning the sacraments and to print it as it now stands. "The necessity of this rule," says Lee, "appeared in the conduct of Mr. Strawbridge, a local preacher, who had taken on him to administer the ordinances among the Methodists without the consent of their preachers, who at that time were all lay preachers. We were only a religious society and not a Church. But as the most of our society had been brought up in the Church of England (so-called), and especially those of Maryland and Virginia, it was recommended to them to attend on the service of that Church and to par-

take of the Ordinances at the hands of the ministers, for at that time the Church people were established by law in Maryland and Virginia, and the ministers were supported by a tax on the people. In many places for a hundred miles together there was no one to baptize a child, except a minister of the established Church.”* Hence the first Conference directed that “all the people among whom we labor be earnestly exhorted to attend the Church and to receive the Ordinances there; but in particular to press the people in Maryland and Virginia to the observance of this Minute.” Lee says that “the greatest objection to this plan was that by far the greater part of the clergy of the established Church were destitute of religion.”

Only two other regulations were adopted, one of which was that “no person or persons be admitted into our love-feasts oftener than twice or thrice, unless they become members; and none to be admitted to the society meetings more than thrice.” The admission to these meetings of persons who were not members was one of the things alleged against the administration of Boardman and Pilmoor. Now a limit to the attendance of such persons at these meetings was authoritatively fixed. The other and last regulation made by the Conference was that “every preacher who acts as assistant is to send an account of the work once in six months to the General Assistant.” Rankin was now the General Assistant, and as such presided at the Conference and stationed the preachers. The stations were: New York: Thomas Rankin. Philadelphia: George Shadford, to change in four months. New Jersey: John King, William Watters. Watters did not go to that field, however, but remained in Virginia until the end of the summer, and then returned to Maryland, after which he went to travel on Kent Circuit, and still later in the Conference year he labored in Baltimore. King was in New Jersey at least once in that year, but whether he did much work there is not known. To Baltimore were assigned Francis Asbury, Robert Strawbridge, Abraham Whitworth, Joseph Yearby. Richard Wright was appointed to Norfolk,

* Lee's History of the Methodists, pp. 47-8.

and Robert Williams to Petersburg. Such was the distribution of the laborers at the first American Conference.

Rankin says the Conference sat Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, July 14, 15, 16, 1773, and that seven preachers were present beside Boardman and Pilmoor. Stevens, in noting the arrival of Asbury the second day of the session, says he made the tenth preacher in attendance. This assertion is not warranted by Rankin, who gives the total number as nine, inclusive of Boardman and Pilmoor. The only members of the Conference who left any account of it were Rankin, Pilmoor, and Asbury, and no one of these has given us the names of the preachers who were present. It is known that the following named men were there: Richard Boardman, Joseph Pilmoor, Francis Asbury, Thomas Rankin, and George Shadford. Williams and Watters were not present. To obtain the nine who, according to Rankin, were in attendance, we must take four names from the six following: John King, Robert Strawbridge, Abraham Whitworth, Joseph Yearby, Richard Wright, and Captain Webb. Webb almost certainly was there, but as he was not to be stationed it is not certain whether Rankin included him in the number of the attendants he reported. Pilmoor was in Philadelphia before, during, and after the Conference, and as he gives no intimation of the presence of either Strawbridge or King in that city in the summer of 1773 it seems probable that they were the absent men. If they were, the personnel of the Conference was as follows: Boardman, Pilmoor, Webb, Asbury, Wright, Rankin, Shadford, Yearby, Whitworth.

Most of these men we have encountered already in our narrative. Of Yearby and Whitworth we know but little. Yearby came over with Rankin and Shadford, but preached only a year or two in connection with the Conference. Whitworth was an Englishman, probably of uncommon eloquence, who preached in New Jersey in the summer and autumn of 1772. His chief distinction seems to have arisen from the fact that he was instrumental in effecting the moral and spiritual reformation of the famous Benjamin Abbott, who, at the time of the session of the first Conference, had

not begun his extraordinary ministry. Whitworth lapsed morally, and Abbott in his *Life* refers to his fall. His sin, it is said, was intemperance. A passage in Asbury's *Journal*, July 23, 1774, apparently relates to Whitworth, though only initials are given. It is this: "A letter from Mr. R. [ankin?] brought melancholy tidings of A. W. Alas for that man! He has been useful, but was puffed up, and so fell into the snare of the devil. My heart pitied him, but I fear he died a backslider."

The name of William Watters appears in the Minutes of the first Conference, although he did not attend it. Against the claim that he was the first travelling preacher produced by Methodism in this country stands the fact that Edward Evans itinerated and died in New Jersey before Watters began to preach. In his autobiography Watters says he was the "first American" who went "out among the Methodists to preach the Gospel." Probably he had not heard of Evans, who had finished his course. There is no evidence that Evans was not an American by birth. He certainly appears to have begun his work as a Methodist preacher here. We have seen that in the autumn of 1772 Watters went forth from Maryland with Robert Williams, and that he joined Pilmoor at Norfolk the eighteenth of November in that year.

He was born October 6, 1751, was converted in Baltimore County, Md., in May, 1771, and was in the itinerancy from 1772 to 1783, when he located. He returned to the ranks for a very brief time in 1786, and then again in 1801, remaining in the itinerancy until 1806, when he finally retired. He owned a considerable farm near Langley, Virginia, where he lived in comfort above forty years, and there, according to the record in his family Bible, he died October 29, 1827. His grave is not far from the house which was so long his home.

Watters was a spotless, zealous, beloved, and successful Methodist preacher. His voice was sweet, and his manner quiet, and he sometimes greatly moved the people. He was in the best sense a popular preacher. The Rev. Richard Tydings in 1812 travelled Fairfax Circuit, Virginia, within

which Watters lived. Tydings says Watters's head was "almost as white as wool. Before him I had to preach about twice or three times every four weeks, and what oppressed and afflicted me most was that I had to lead him in class. After some time, discovering my embarrassment, he talked to me about it and said: 'You must not be or do so.' I shall never forget the answer I gave him. I told him he might talk as he pleased, but it was utterly impossible for me to look at his gray head and feel otherwise than I did, so he turned away and said no more to me about the matter. I never heard him laugh and seldom ever saw him smile, and thought I had hardly ever seen in all my life a more venerable-looking man. His preaching was plain, but sound and strong. Notwithstanding he had lived many years in the place where I found him, and had preached much at home and in the surrounding cities—Washington, Georgetown, and Alexandria—no man was more acceptable in the pulpit than he, or could command at all times larger congregations." * In regard to abstaining from laughter Watters, in his *Life*, (p. 41), says: "I do confess that lightness and trifling on any occasion ill becomes a Christian, and especially a preacher of the gospel. Let others plead the innocence or usefulness of levity: I cannot; though God knows I am too often betrayed into it, but never without feeling that it more or less unfits me for that deep recollection and that constant communication with the Lord which nothing should for a moment interrupt."

George Shadford powerfully assisted in advancing the new cause in America. He was a sturdy champion of the faith, but of only mediocre ability as a preacher. Both here and in England he was noted for his power in prayer. Freeborn Garrettson, in his *Semi-Centennial sermon*, refers to the Conference of 1777, the last that Rankin and Shadford attended, and says: "I shall never forget the parting prayer of that blessed servant of God, Mr. Shadford. The place seemed to be shaken with the power of God." The

* Sketch of the Rev. Richard Tydings's *Life*, appended to his *Refutation of the Doctrine of Uninterrupted Apostolic Succession*, p. 309. Louisville, 1844.

historian of Methodism in the city of Norwich, England, where, shortly after he left America, Shadford labored, says "he was mighty in prayer." Herein lay the chief secret of his success. His discourses were simple, methodical, plain, clear, full of Scriptural phraseology, and delivered with pathos.* Lorkin, in his "History of Wesleyan Methodism in Norwich," declares that Shadford, who was in that circuit in 1779, "was a most alarming preacher," and he adds that his "labors were generally useful and acceptable to the people. One instance of the fruit of his ministry, I well remember, was a man of most infamous character, noted for his extreme wickedness, who from mere curiosity went to hear Mr. Shadford. He was deeply convinced of his sin and danger, and soundly converted. A short time after he was taken ill, and died happy in the favor of God."

Jesse Lee must often have heard Shadford preach in Virginia in 1775. The biographer of Lee says: "Mr. Shadford preached in a bold, energetic style, searching the heart, and stripping the sinner and false professor of every refuge; sometimes proclaiming the law from Sinai, and then pointing to the blood of Jesus Christ."

The Rev. Devereux Jarratt describes a great revival of religion in Virginia which broke out in December, 1775, but increased to greater magnitude in January, 1776. It began at nearly the same time in three places. One of the places was in Amelia County and "had for many years," says Jarratt, "been notorious for carelessness, profaneness and immoralities of all kinds. Gaming, swearing, drunkenness and the like were their delight, while things sacred were their scorn and contempt. Mr. Shadford preached several times at the three places above mentioned and to many not in vain. While their ears were opened by novelty, God set his word home upon their hearts. Many sinners were powerfully convinced, and 'Mercy! Mercy!' was their cry."

Shadford was appointed to Brunswick Circuit, Virginia, at the Conference in 1775. Shadford "found there," says Rankin,

* Life of Shadford, in Jackson's *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, Vol. VI. London.

“about eight hundred joined together, but in a very confused manner. When Mr. Shadford took an account of the societies before he came to the Conference in 1776 they contained two thousand six hundred and sixty-four persons, of whom eighteen hundred were added in one year. Above a thousand of these had found peace with God, many of whom thirsted for all the mind that was in Christ.”* Shadford, in going to Virginia, was dejected in spirit, and says he was amazed when he first began to preach there, “for I seldom preached a sermon but some were convinced and converted, often three or four at a time.”

Mr. Shadford seems to have returned to England in the spring of 1778 with Rankin in Captain Parker's ship. He was useful in the ministry there after his return, but for many years before his death was on the retired list. He died March 11, 1816, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. His last words were: “I'll praise, I'll praise, I'll praise.”

The greatest man that sat in the first American Conference no doubt was Francis Asbury, who was to become one of the grandest heroes of modern Christian history. Of Pauline consecration, he, like Paul, was destined to be “in labors more abundant,” and daily to bear “the care of all the Churches.” As he sat in Conference with his brethren his inherent greatness was not fully seen. But twenty-eight years old, there had not come to him the varied experience and mature wisdom which were to render him so eminently the master of the great opportunities which in the course of Divine Providence were given to him. He was to shape and impel, to a success then undreamed of, the movement which had brought into existence that humble convocation of Wesleyan preachers in Philadelphia in 1773. Henceforth until his death in 1816 his genius for ecclesiastical leadership, his saintly devotion, his unceasing and phenomenal travels and labors were to become a part of the history of American Methodism and of American Christianity.

The most conspicuous figure in this historic Conference was Thomas Rankin. He sat as chief in authority under

* A Brief Narrative of the Revival in Virginia, pp. 30-31. London, 1778.

Mr. Wesley. Of strong character, sound intellect, and vigorous adherence to his convictions, his administration was to prove successful. William Watters heard him preach, and says, "I was much pleased with him; I always thought him qualified to fill his place as General Assistant among us, notwithstanding his particularities. He was not only a man of grace, but of strong and quick parts." *

Had he remained here without displaying his hostility to the American war Rankin would almost certainly have continued in authority, and in that case Asbury would not have come to the superintendency in 1784. His departure, together with that of the other English preachers from this country, gave to Asbury his vast opportunity, and left him in control of the work.

Rankin was a preacher of good abilities, and at times he was very powerful. Pilmoor heard him in New York on the first Sunday in September, 1773, and remarked that "he seemed to have liberty and power in dispensing the Word." Rankin was preaching on Sunday afternoon, June 30, 1776, at Boisseau's Chapel, Virginia, from the text, "I have set before thee an open door and none can shut it." In the progress of the sermon hundreds fell to the ground. Streaming eyes, groans and strong cries that drowned the preacher's voice showed the intensity of the emotion that shook the congregation as a forest is swept by a tornado. Rankin sat down in the pulpit and with Shadford observed the extraordinary scene, which continued for over an hour. It was with difficulty that the people could be persuaded to return to their homes as night drew on. †

Notwithstanding occasional instances in which he wielded rare power over his audiences, Rankin could scarcely be called a popular preacher. He had personal peculiarities that diminished his pulpit attractiveness. ‡ The most striking traits in his character, according to his biographer, were "sincerity, steadiness, and sobriety." "He was a man truly

* Watters's Life, p. 35.

† A Brief Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Virginia, pp. 30-31.

‡ Life of Rankin, in Jackson's Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. V.

devoted to God, and in death witnessed a good confession. He finished his course with joy" * May 17, 1810.

Robert Strawbridge proceeded independently. He would administer the sacraments according to his own plan despite the authority of the Conference. In 1778 the Conference asked the following question: "Shall we guard against a separation from the Church, directly or indirectly?" The answer given was, "By all means." Being a movement in the Church of England, Methodism directed its adherents to obtain the sacraments from ordained ministers of that Church. Asbury strongly objected to the course of Strawbridge, but the latter was unyielding. "I read a part of our minutes," says Asbury, "to see if Brother Strawbridge would conform, but he appeared to be inflexible. He would not administer the ordinances under our direction at all." Probably it was because of this that his name appeared in the Minutes only once after the first Conference.

Strawbridge, however, was to the end a Methodist preacher, who could not be moved from his loyalty to what he believed was right. In the summer of 1781 he died. His convert, Owen, preached his funeral sermon. His successful labors as a founder and builder of Methodism in one of its chief fields have made his

"One of the few, the immortal names
That were not born to die."

Such was the first Conference of Methodism in America and the men who composed it. It was the day of small things. But a larger field and greater conquests were now before the rising Church. When in 1778 Rankin laid down his authority and sailed for Cork he left behind him about six thousand members, which was a decline of nearly one thousand from the preceding year, which loss no doubt was due to the war of the Revolution.

* Life of Rankin, in Jackson's *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, Vol. V.

THIRD PERIOD.

FROM THE FIRST CONFERENCE TO THE DEPARTURE OF BOARDMAN AND PILMOOR TO ENGLAND.

HAVING brought this history down to the close of the first American Conference, which established the Methodist connection in America, I might appropriately lay down my pen. But two of the foremost instruments in bringing forth this important result—Boardman and Pilmoor—continued their ministry in this country nearly six months after the close of the Conference, and then they returned to England. For the sake of completing the remaining part of the period of their labors, I shall proceed with my narrative down to the time of their departure from the country.

Pilmoor remained but two days in Philadelphia after the first Conference rose. On the nineteenth of July, 1773, he started with Henry Newton in the stage for New York, where they arrived in the evening of the next day. He had very many of the people visit him on his return after an absence of over fourteen months. Boardman also returned to New York shortly after the Conference, and on Sunday, the first of August, Pilmoor asserts that “Mr. Boardman preached a profitable sermon on Walking with God.” The next day Rankin, Boardman, and Pilmoor dined with a Mr. Vanhorne, who was accustomed to entertain Mr. Whitefield. That afternoon Pilmoor visited a young man in the jail who was under sentence of death, and who acknowledged his wretchedness with tears. Pilmoor “spoke to him of the heinousness of sin, prayed with him and left him to the Mercy of the great High Priest.” The following Sabbath Rankin preached in John Street, morning and evening; Pilmoor was not present on account of a severe ague and fever. The next Sunday morning he was able to preach in John Street.

Though still feeble, he started for the country with Mr. Crook, August 18, 1773. They went on board Mr. Smith's "boat at seven o'clock, and about ten landed at his home, near West Chester." While in the country he spent a night at Philip Bartow's. Pilmoor also called on Mr. Abrahams, at New Rochelle, where he met his friend, Mr. Theodosius Bartow, with whom, he says, "I am closely united in the bonds of brotherly love." Sunday morning, the twenty-second of August, he preached to "a small but serious congregation, and in the afternoon he went to Mr. Devou's, where, he says, "I found a great number of people gathered from various quarters," to whom he preached the word, and on Monday preached again. Three days later Mr. Devou accompanied him to Mr. Bennett's, where in the evening he preached to a large company. The following day he preached again. On Sunday, August 29, he had a small company in the morning, "but in the afternoon the people flocked from all quarters, so that we had the largest congregation," he says, "I ever saw in this country before. When preaching was over I met the society and found them fully determined to run with patience the race set before them." The next day he went to Mr. Abraham's and the following morning "set out pretty early and reached New York in time to preach in the evening." The next evening Rankin preached there to a few people. Pilmoor deplored the effect of the change in the administration in New York, which was shown in the diminished congregations. The following day Pilmoor visited the jail.

The third of October, 1773, Rankin left New York City for a short trip in the country, leaving Pilmoor in the city. The ensuing Sunday Pilmoor was in John Street in the morning hour, and at ten at Trinity Church, where he enjoyed the sacrament. At six Rankin preached, "and seemed to have liberty and power." Pilmoor attended Dr. Ogilvie's lecture at night, with which he was "pleased and profited." Dr. John Ogilvie was then fifty years old, and died November 26, 1774. He was a missionary to the Mohawks and for ten years labored in behalf of the Indians. In 1764 he was appointed assistant minister to Trinity Church, New York. The evening after

Ogilvie's lecture, Pilmoor preached in John Street to a large congregation.

September eighth, 1773, John Wallace and some others from Philadelphia arrived in New York, having come "an hundred miles to visit the people of God." The ensuing Friday was set "apart as a day of fasting and prayer for a revival of the work of the Lord." "At the watch meeting," says Pilmoor, "we had many to join with us and found it a season of grace." The next day he spent "an hour with the rector, who," he says, "received me very kindly and treated me with the utmost respect." On Sunday, November 12, Rankin preached in John Street in the evening, and Pilmoor "met the society;" then Pilmoor went over to Paulus Hook, now Jersey City, with his "Philadelphia friends in order to be ready for the stage in the morning." They left the Hook about four on Monday morning, and at night arrived at Princeton. Tuesday Pilmoor stopped at Trenton, New Jersey, to visit the society and preached there three times. In the evening of his arrival he "preached in the shell of the new chapel in Trenton, and many of the hearers seemed deeply affected with the word. The next night [Wednesday] the congregation was much larger, and the power of God was present to heal the broken-hearted." Thursday he preached again in Trenton.

It is thus made apparent that in the middle of September, 1773, the chapel at Trenton, though unfinished, was used for preaching. The indefiniteness of Asbury's journalistic records detract from their value. Asbury says that he was in New Jersey from April 17 to the 22nd, and in that time he saw "the foundation laid of a new preaching house 35 feet by 30;" but he does not indicate the place, nor does he intimate in what locality he was in any of the days that he then spent in New Jersey. Now, we learn from Pilmoor that it must have been at Trenton that he saw the foundation of a chapel laid, for it no doubt was in the structure reared upon that foundation that Pilmoor preached at Trenton five months later. The church at Trenton, therefore, was the first that was built by the Methodists in New Jersey, and was about the sixth that was built in

America prior to the first Conference. Greenwich Church, as we have seen, was built by the people of that community two years earlier, and was served by Edward Evans, a Methodist preacher, but it belonged chiefly to Episcopalians, and after Mr. Evans's death the Methodists who belonged to the society went out from the edifice. On Friday, the seventeenth of September, says Pilmoor, "I took leave of the dear people of Trenton, went on with the stage to Bristol, and crossed over the ferry to visit the city of Burlington." He preached in the evening in the court-house in Burlington, and also the next evening. On Sunday morning at ten o'clock he had another meeting, and at four he met the society which was formed by Captain Webb nearly three years previously. Sunday evening he preached to the largest congregation he ever saw in Burlington before. "My soul," he says, "was exceedingly happy in speaking for God, his presence filled the place, and the hearts of the people were greatly affected. After preaching I spoke to them of the nature and design of the United Society, and exhorted them to share in the blessings of it."

The next day, September 20, 1773, Pilmoor went to Philadelphia, where he found Shadford preaching. "The dear people flocked about me," he says, "and seemed as glad as if they had received me from the dead. These precious followers of Jesus never vary in their affection for Mr. Boardman and me. Our hearts are united in love." Soon after this he breakfasted with Mr. Wilmer, where he conversed with a gentleman who thought the Methodist preachers had "as much right to administer the sacraments as to preach;" and wondered how they could be satisfied without them. The lack of the sacraments was now the most ominous fact in the newly established connection. That night Pilmoor preached in Philadelphia, and the "rest of the week was taken up with study and visiting the people, who are still zealous for God, but nothing like what I have known them." He says, "how apt men are to leave their first love and to become cold and indifferent. O that God may rekindle the sacred fire."

Sunday, September 26, Pilmoor was greatly blest in Philadelphia "both in hearing and preaching." The next day he at-

tended the "Friends' meeting and was enabled to worship God in the Spirit," and at night he "preached the gospel of the kingdom." The next day he visited "the prisoners in the jail," and preached "salvation to the poor." On Saturday, October 2, he met the children and penitents. The next evening he preached in St. George's to "the largest congregation that had been there for more than a year." Pilmoor continued his zealous toil in Philadelphia until Friday, October 7, 1773, on which day, he says, "I was comforted by the arrival of Mr. Williams from Virginia, and we rejoiced together in the Lord." The following Sunday morning Williams preached in Philadelphia, "and gave us," says Pilmoor, "a useful discourse." Afterward they heard Mr. Stringer in St. Paul's, and Mr. Duche in Christ Church, "and at night St. George's was crowded with hearers," to whom Pilmoor preached. "After sermon," he says, "God comforted our hearts at the General Society."

He went into New Jersey on the twelfth of October, 1773, and Robert Williams was with him at Mount Holly, where there was a fine congregation that day, to whom Pilmoor preached "in the Presbyterian meeting, and deep seriousness," he says, "sat upon every face while I explained and enforced these words of our Lord, 'Be ye therefore Ready.'" After the sermon "Mr. Williams gave a profitable exhortation," says Pilmoor, "and then we went on about seven miles with Mr. Bond, to his house, near Juliustown. At ten o'clock the next day I preached in a tavern in the town, and had great freedom and enlargedness of heart. Afterward I went on with Mr. Bond and his family to New Mills [Pemberton], where I preached in the Baptist meeting. There also I had great comfort in preaching the gospel, and was made to rejoice in hope that I did not labor in vain. I returned to Mr. Bond's, where I spent the evening in conversation with several persons who had been to hear me preach." On the fourteenth he returned to Philadelphia, having given two days to New Jersey. Two of the places at which he preached have from that day been conspicuous in New Jersey Methodism—Mount Holly and Pemberton. It has been thought that the

church at Pemberton was the first Methodist sanctuary in New Jersey. Pilmoor has told us that he preached in the chapel at Trenton before he made this visit to Pemberton. If there had been a chapel at Pemberton he would scarcely have preached in the Baptist meeting, as he did. Therefore it is apparent that there was no Methodist Church at Pemberton in September, 1773.

Rankin and Pilmoor both were in Philadelphia and both preached there on the twentieth of October. The following Sunday, the 26th, Robert Williams preached in Philadelphia. The next day, Monday, Rankin preached at six in the morning in that town, and in the evening George Shadford, who was about to leave for New York, preached his farewell sermon in Philadelphia. The next evening Pilmoor heard Rankin.

Philadelphia was now left with a diminished ministerial force, Shadford having departed for New York, and about the same time, in the closing days of October, 1773, Rankin, Williams, and Ebert started for quarterly meeting in Maryland. This is the last time we meet Williams in the North. He had made a round in New Jersey during this visit, but soon he was back in Virginia, where, in 1774, he formed the first circuit in that province and began to receive members into society. Within two years his wide and laborious travels and his aggressive and very fruitful ministry ceased, and he was laid to rest near where he lived after his last marriage, between Norfolk and Suffolk, in Virginia. In referring to the departure of the above-named preachers to Maryland, which was Rankin's first journey thither, Pilmoor remarks: "The Lord has so blessed our labors in that province, especially in Baltimore County, that we have now a large body of people as closely united as our brethren in Europe, and as lively and zealous as the original Methodists." To this result the devoted and indefatigable Williams greatly contributed.

Pilmoor continued to labor in Philadelphia, visiting from house to house, meeting the children on Saturday afternoons, and attending to all departments of the work. The last

Sunday night of October "we had," he says, "one of our old congregations." On the second of November he heard John Brainard, brother to David Brainard, and his successor as missionary to the Indians. His discourse on the revival of religion was, says Pilmoor, "very profitable." November 13 he saw "the Rev. Mr. Caldwell, an excellent minister of Christ from Elizabethtown," N. J., to whom there is a reference in an earlier part of our narrative. Of Mr. Caldwell, Pilmoor now says: "God has greatly honored him of late with wonderful success in his ministry and my heart rejoices in his prosperity." After meeting the children on Saturday, November 13, Pilmoor "went to hear a young man who," he says, "is lately come up from Maryland. He seemed to be in a measure engaged for God, but nothing like so zealous as I expected. However, my heart rejoices that the Lord is raising up laborers and thrusting them out to proclaim salvation in the deserts." It is certain, as a collation of statements in Asbury's Journal, in Gatch's life, and in Pilmoor's Journal shows, that this young man was Philip Gatch. Very soon after Pilmoor heard him Gatch went into New Jersey with John King, which fact shows that King was at this time in Philadelphia. It is also clear that Rankin had now returned to that city from Maryland, as he brought Gatch with him.

Rankin was ill after he returned from Maryland, so that Pilmoor had to fill his appointments for two or three days. On the 25th of November Pilmoor "was comforted under Mr. Rankin." On December second there appeared in Philadelphia Richard Boardman, who, says Pilmoor, "is dearer to me than most other preachers, being my fellow laborer and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus. At night he gave us an excellent sermon on gospel holiness, which was much blest to the congregation." The next night Rankin "showed the nature of that river that makes glad the city of God." On the eighth of December, 1773, Pilmoor went to Burlington, New Jersey, and preached there that evening to a congregation "considerably large and deeply attentive." Mr. Boardman being anxious to see him in New York to consult about their return to Europe he "set off early

in the morning with the stage and reached Amboy about six in the evening." The next day, says Pilmoor, "we took boat for New York. The wind presently rose and was quite contrary. We had many women on board who were greatly distressed, especially when we struck two or three times upon the shoals. They cried out most lamentably and entreated me to persuade the Captain to turn back. In our distress my heart was lifted to the Lord, and he gave me a confident hope that all would be well. This so affected me that I spoke to my fellow-passengers and bade them be of good cheer, for no harm would come to any of us, but all would be brought safe to the land; and so it was, for after we had beat about for seven hours, during which time we were in the utmost distress, the Lord brought us all safe to New York, and I had the happiness to hear Mr. Boardman in the evening."

Captain Webb and Pilmoor now met again in New York, where so many times they had communed and toiled and rejoiced together. On Sunday morning, December 12, 1773, the Captain preached in John Street "with much zeal and devotion, and the Lord gave his blessing to the word. In the evening," Pilmoor adds, "our chapel was crowded as it used to be some years ago, and my Master was with me in preaching the word of his grace."

This is the last time we shall meet Captain Webb in our narrative. He lived in New York prior to his conversion and years before Embury began his ministry there. Webb was married to his second wife in New York, and was there engaged in promoting a real-estate enterprise—by seeking to sell or settle a large tract of western lands. He must have returned to England subsequently, for there he was converted. He was not a stranger in New York, therefore, when he appeared at the side of Embury and became such an effective instrument in advancing the new and feeble Wesleyan movement in that city. After his lengthened and successful labors in American Methodism he amid the turbulence of the Revolutionary times found it prudent to return to England. He was an outspoken loyalist, and he aroused antipathies by his indiscretions respecting the war. "Tradition sometimes tells

truths of which the history of the times says nothing, and it is certain that in the reminiscences of the aged Methodists we find that Captain Webb was so imprudent in speaking against opposition to Britain that he was obliged to hide away in the premises of a reputed Tory, near New Mills, [Pemberton, New Jersey,] for some months before he could make his escape to England." *

After his return to England, Webb lived for a time in Bath, where his devotion and zeal shone forth in their old-time lustre, and he was known there as a man deeply experienced in the things of God. Afterward his residence was in Bristol. In that city he died suddenly in the night of December 10, 1796. He was a true "hero of Methodism," and in its history his name must ever be illustrious.

The treatment Pilmoor and Boardman received induced Pilmoor to write: "How wonderful it is that the people are as eager to hear Mr. Boardman and me as they were the first day we arrived in America. Blessed be God who has kept us by his gracious power, so that we have not done anything to hinder our usefulness in this country, or make the people wish to have us removed."

No ship being ready to sail, Pilmoor returned to Philadelphia. On Sunday evening, December 19, Rankin preached in that city. Pilmoor visited from house to house, which service he remarks is "one of the most important duties of a Christian minister." He still showed his interest in young men. As he was going to St. Paul's in the evening of December 22, 1773, "I observed," he says, "three young men standing in the street as if they were strangers. I went up to them and told them we were going to church, and begged they would go with us, which they readily consented to do, and afterward I took them with me to the prayer-meeting." Two days after this Pilmoor received a letter from Boardman, informing him that a ship was soon to sail for Bristol, that he had taken passage, and wished a final word from Pilmoor about accompanying him home. "This," says Pilmoor, "put

*Methodism in West Jersey, by the Rev. G. A. Raybold, p. 197. New York, 1849.

me to the *trial*, for at that time I had a matter of great importance under consideration, which afforded me a most pleasing prospect, both as to the conveniences of life and the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, but after some deliberation I resolved to sacrifice my own ease, comfort, and inclination, and return with my fellow traveller to Europe. Friendship had so united our hearts that I could not bear the thought of letting him go alone, and therefore left all my concerns unsettled that I might accompany him to our native land."

The last Sunday of December, 1773, Pilmoor declares "was a day never to be forgotten. My heart was so affected by the thought of leaving a people who are dear to me as life itself, that I was almost overwhelmed with sorrow. I should certainly have yielded to the entreaties of my friends to continue in America, only I was determined not to desert Mr. Boardman, though it should cost me my life. God gave me such comfort in him that in the evening I preached my farewell sermon to a vast multitude of weeping citizens with much more firmness than I expected. After preaching we kept a love-feast, and the God of love was eminently present and filled our hearts with divine consolation." Of this occasion, Rankin, in his Journal, says: "Brother Pilmoor preached his farewell sermon in the evening, and we concluded the day with a general love-feast. The presence of the Holy One of Israel was in the midst, and many rejoiced in hope of the Glory of God. Next day he set off for New York, whence Brother Boardman and he are to sail for England. Yet a little while and we shall meet to part no more."

On Monday, December 27, many persons called to take leave of Pilmoor at Mr. Wallace's, "a family for whom," he says, "I feel much more affection than can be expressed." About ten o'clock he started for New York. He stopped at Burlington, New Jersey, and preached in the court-house the same evening "with particular freedom and power, and took leave of the dear people in the fulness of that love which unites all believers in one." The next day he crossed to Bristol, Pa., but "the snow was so very deep no wheel carriage

could pass." Distressed lest he should fail to reach New York in time to sail with Boardman, he, on the 29th, "set off with a Mr. Bessanet in a sleigh for Trenton." He arrived there late, but several people, hearing that he was in town, "came," he said, "to spend the evening with me, whom I endeavored to build up and establish in the faith. We parted, fully resolved to be followers of God all the days of our lives." The next day he reached New Brunswick, and the day following he came to New York. There on the ensuing day—Sunday, January 2, 1774—"many people flocked to the chapel, to whom," says Pilmoor, "I preached my farewell sermon with feelings too big for expression, and commended them to the protection of Israel's Shepherd." At this point Pilmoor's manuscript is mutilated. I gather from the torn document, however, that he and Boardman that day sailed in "Captain Clark's ship." In this connection also are the words "hospitable citizens," "select friends." Thus ended the extraordinary labors, extending over more than four years and two months in America of two eminent Methodist preachers, the first that Mr. Wesley sent hither to cultivate this great western vineyard.

Pilmoor did not re-enter the regular itinerancy immediately after his return to England, yet he was not idle. He wrote to Mrs. Thorn, in Philadelphia, from Kingwood, under date of April 9, 1775, a letter which still exists in the original manuscript. In it he said: "Though I do not think it expedient to stand in the same degree of connection with the Methodists as I have done, I still labor in their part of the vineyard. I frequently preach five times a week and am glad of an opportunity to do something for my Master. How my future days may be employed I cannot tell, but I am determined they shall be laid out for Christ in one way or another. I am at present fully resolved to go forward after Jesus Christ, and expect to meet you by and by either in this world or the world above us."

Pilmoor's name appeared the following year—1776—in the appointments in the English Minutes for the first time after his return, and he was stationed in London. In 1777

and 1778 his station was Norwich. In 1779 he was in Edinburgh; in 1780 and 1781 at Dublin; 1782 at Nottingham; in 1783 at Edinburgh again; in 1784, York. This is the last time his name appears in the Wesleyan Minutes. Myles, in his "History of Methodism," in speaking of Wesley's "Deed of Declaration," by which, in 1784, he gave a legal status to his Conference, says: "Joseph Pilmoor with a few other traveling preachers were greatly offended that their names were not inserted in the deed." Dr., afterward Bishop, Emory of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in a foot-note he inserted in Watson's life of Wesley in 1831, said this omission of his name "in all probability had a principal influence in his [Pilmoor's] coming to America again, and taking orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church. We believe, however, that he always continued friendly with our body, and lived and died an evangelical and highly respected minister." Emory was a pastor in Philadelphia while Pilmoor was rector of St. Paul's Church in that city, and therefore may be considered an authority on this subject. While Pilmoor labored in this country as a Methodist preacher, Methodism was known as a religious movement in the Church of England. He received ordination at the hands of Bishop Seabury of Connecticut, in the latter part of the year 1784.

Boardman, after his return to England, quickly found his place again in the Wesleyan ranks. In 1774 and 1775 he was stationed at Londonderry; in 1776 and 1777 at Cork; in 1778 his name does not appear in the appointments in the English Minutes; in 1779 his field was Limerick; in 1780 he was stationed in London with Thomas Coke, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, and Joseph Bradford; in 1781 his station was Limerick, and in 1782 Cork. This was his last field. Eleven days after he entered it he went to his reward. On Friday morning he was at the Intercession, "and was observed to pray," says Atmore, "with an uncommon degree of power." About nine o'clock in the evening of that day, October 4, 1784, "he expired in the arms of two of his brethren and in the presence of many of his friends."

Great and greatly fruitful were the services rendered by

those saintly men, Boardman and Pilmoor, to the New Wesleyan movement in America. There has been much ignorance respecting them in the connection they did so much to establish. They have been somewhat misunderstood, and numerous errors have been promulgated respecting the rising cause during the period they were promoting it by their diligent, arduous, and successful labors. But for their presence here from the fall of 1769 until the beginning of 1774 the history of Methodism in this country might have been different from what it is. Well-poised men were they, discreet, cultured, holy, eloquent, lovers of mankind and aflame with zeal for Christ. Their work was wrought in love and its effects are immortal. It is a felicity of my life that I have been permitted to delineate their characters, to describe their work, and to chronicle the events of Methodism in the period of, and in connection with, their powerful and apostolic ministry.

A final word respecting Embury and my task is done. When the first Conference met in Philadelphia, the man who by his preaching originated Methodism in the New World was still here, though not at the Conference. About one month after its close he suddenly ascended to his everlasting rest. In Mr. Embury's private book of memoranda, Samuel Embury wrote the following sentence: "My father, Philip Embury, died in August, 1773, aged forty-five years." Dr. Stevens gives 1775 as the year in which Embury died, though he says the year is doubtful. A manuscript document in possession of the Troy Conference Historical Society shows that Embury was not alive in the summer of 1775. It proves that a conveyance of land by David Embury, Executor, and Margaret Embury, Executrix, of Philip Embury, was made July 1, 1775, to Francis Nicholson. This sufficiently corroborates the assertion of Samuel Embury respecting the date of his father's death. Embury's memory must always be associated with the memory of those who have turned many to righteousness and who shine as the stars for ever and ever.

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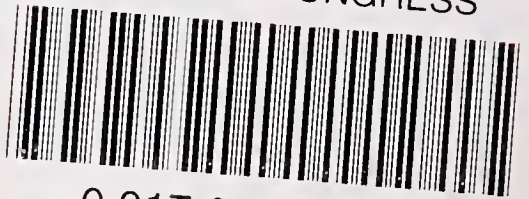
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